



'KEEP THE UP WILD' SAY 350 GROUPS TO LAWMAKERS

Peninsulas come together to promote Wilderness protections at committee hearing

JUNE 16, 2022

More than 350 groups from the Upper Peninsula and across the state came together Wednesday to show the Michigan Senate how good protected, pristine nature could be for the UP's people, economy, and community.

Leading organizations of [Keep the UP Wild](#)—a group of environmental, religious, business, academic and community leaders—submitted [written testimony](#) Wednesday urging the Senate Natural Resources Committee to oppose [Senate Resolution 150](#). **Horst Schmidt**, president of the **Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition** and key Keep the UP Wild leader, provided video testimony.

If passed, SR 150 would make the chamber formally oppose federal efforts to fully protect critical land in the Upper Peninsula under a Wilderness designation. The resolution cleared its committee in a 4-1 vote.

Keep the UP Wild is advocating for Michigan's Congressional delegation to designate four natural areas as Wilderness, the highest level of federal environmental protection. The areas make up just over 50,000 acres—3% of the Ottawa National Forest they are found in.

"The Upper Peninsula is truly blessed with a rare resource few other states have: wild lands," said **Aaron Peterson**, Marquette resident, owner of **Aaron Peterson Studios**, and member of Keep the UP Wild. "They support so much biodiversity, bring in so many people across the state and nation, and provide so much to the local economy. We will only be able to maintain these lands if we make the effort to protect them. A Wilderness designation is our best opportunity."

The Michigan Environmental Council is a member of Keep the UP Wild.

TO SPEAK TO...

Aaron Peterson, Aaron Peterson Studios
Horst Schmidt, Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Conan Smith, Michigan Environmental Council

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The Michigan Environmental Council serves on the steering committee of Keep the UP Wild.