

## **Testimony in Support of HB 4160**

Submitted by

Bill Sheffer

Director

Michigan Association of Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds (MARVAC)

**“Our mission- Through legislation, education, marketing and public awareness, MARVAC works to improve the business climate for its members and to encourage growth in the recreation vehicle and campground industries while contributing to the quality of Michigan tourism.”**

MARVAC represents over 250 companies made up of RV manufacturers, RV dealers, privately and publically owned campgrounds. There are over 300,000 recreation vehicles registered with Michigan’s Secretary of State and nearly 150,000 campsites as licensed by Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality. According to 2007 US census data, Michigan RV dealers produced \$677 million in total sales revenue, had a payroll of over \$57 million and employed over 1500 employees. This was fourth in the nation behind only the warm weather states of California, Texas and Florida. In 2007, Michigan had 262 RV parks and campgrounds which generated \$141.8 million in sales revenue and had an annual payroll totaling \$40.3 million. The 262 Michigan RV parks and campgrounds had 1,538 paid employees.

MARVAC has and continues to partner with Travel Michigan featuring the Pure Michigan brand in television, radio and print ads for its five state-wide public Camper & RV shows; by sponsoring Travel Michigan’s weekly radio program and by placing a prominent Pure Michigan ad in 75,000 copies of the association’s annual RV & Campsite directory. This year we are honored to have a message from Travel Michigan’s Vice-President, George Zimmerman in our directory welcoming RV and camping visitors to our state.

Recreation vehicle owners and campers are spenders. They purchase gasoline, buy groceries, visit tourist attractions, eat in restaurants, play golf, go fishing, ride bikes, attend sporting events and go shopping.

Growth in recreation vehicle use and camping in Michigan has come as the result of the use of the internet. Our links to Pure Michigan, state tourism attractions and fellow tourism groups has expanded the scope of those who are attracted to our state parks and campgrounds. The expansion of Pure Michigan into the social media arena in the past year is one more brick in the foundation of a strong state tourism promotion structure.

Finally, I will give you an example of the effect of the Pure Michigan advertising campaign on recreation vehicle use. This past summer, Craig Rose, a partner in a newer motorhome only RV resort in Petoskey, told me, when asked about Pure Michigan, that they had tracked the home addresses of these high end motorhome owners. They had RVs from 43 different states; that is 43 different license plates that crossed over our state borders to enjoy the campgrounds of Pure Michigan. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of HB 4160. Thank you for your time.