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News from Save Our Shoreline, Inc.

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GOVERNOR SIGNS BILL BANNING INVASIVE SPECIES PHRAGMITES

Bay City, Michigan - Save Our Shoreline announces that Governor Granholm has signed into law 2005 PA 77, that makes the spread of phragmites illegal. The move comes after Save Our Shoreline testified at the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs on Tuesday, May 17, 2005 and asked the Committee to add phragmites to the list of species prohibited under Senate Bill 211, which seeks to stop the introduction of non native species in Michigan. Phragmites australis, otherwise known as the common reed, resembles what is commonly known as cattails, but grows much taller. The plant competes with native wetland vegetation, ultimately crowding out the native plants altogether, destroying wetlands and overtaking beaches.

"This plant, phragmites, is destroying our pristine wetlands along the Saginaw Bay and many other wetland areas in Michigan," said Ernie Krygier, President of Save Our Shoreline. "We are pleased that the Legislature and the Governor have taken this important step to stop it, before we have lost the Bay's coastal wetlands and beaches entirely," said Krygier. Two of Michigan's preeminent wetlands scientists have advised SOS that phragmites is a grave threat to Michigan wetlands, and that not enough has been done to stop it. Ironically, shoreline residents attempting to rid their beaches of this plant have been stopped by regulators, and three were sued by the Corps of Engineers Detroit District. Virtually unknown in this state a decade ago, phragmites can now be commonly seen not only on the Saginaw Bay, but along Michigan's expressways as well, especially south of Flint. At the urging of SOS, state and federal regulators recently authorized a plan to eliminate phragmites from the shore at the Bay City State Recreation Area later this summer.

Low water levels since 1999 have resulted in the robust proliferation of phragmites along the wetlands and beaches of the Saginaw Bay, which can overtake the newly exposed shorelands

faster than native vegetation. According to studies, phragmites thrives in polluted waters, including waters with high levels of nitrates. Scientists testifying before the Senate committee last year indicated that testing near the mouth of the Saginaw River disclosed the highest levels of nitrates of any location in the state.

Save Our Shoreline is emerging as the state's environmental leader in preventing the proliferation of phragmites along Michigan's Great Lakes coast. "For some reason, our state's environmental community and our regulators have stood relatively quiet on this issue. We hope that soon changes," said Krygier.

Founded in 2001, Save Our Shoreline is a nonprofit membership basis corporation with nearly 3000 households committed to the preservation of beaches and waterfront areas, and to the protection of rights to maintain beaches and waterfront areas. Those interested in Save Our Shoreline can find more information at <http://www.saveourshoreline.org/> or by calling (989) 667-2910. For more information about this press release, contact Ernie Krygier at (989) 793-3711.