



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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## BILL ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383  
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Senate Bill 288 (as enacted)  
Sponsor: Senator Sam Singh  
Senate Committee: Energy and Environment  
House Committee: Energy, Communications, and Technology

### **PUBLIC ACT 105 of 2023**

Date Completed: 5-2-24

### **RATIONALE**

The Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) offers energy assistance and self-sufficiency services to eligible low-income households (households at or below 150% of the Federal poverty level). These services include help with the payment of energy bills, establishment of affordable payment plans, and support for in-home energy efficiency. According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment, 40,000 Michigan households rely on the MEAP. Accordingly, it was suggested that the MEAP's sunset be eliminated.

### **CONTENT**

The bill repealed Section 6 of the Michigan Energy Assistance Act to eliminate the Act's sunset of September 30, 2023.

The bill took effect July 27, 2023.

MCL 400.1236 (repealed)

### **ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

#### **Supporting Argument**

Eliminating the MEAP's sunset will allow the Legislature to use its time more efficiently. According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment, the sunset on the original legislation was extended several times, from 2016 to 2019 to 2023, with broad support. The Legislature has limited time during each two-year legislative session. Eliminating the MEAP's sunset, and therefore the need for the bill to be debated and renewed every couple sessions, will allow the Legislature to spend its time considering other issues going forward.

#### **Supporting Argument**

By eliminating the MEAP's sunset, the Legislature ensured that the State's most vulnerable residents have access to energy assistance. Low-income Michigan residents face many difficulties, including how to heat their homes. According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment, the MEAP is one of only two direct energy assistance programs, the other being the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Many Michigan households rely on the MEAP. Removing the sunset will ensure that the program can continue to help Michigan residents going forward.

#### **Opposing Argument**

The MEAP's sunset served an important purpose, as it required the Legislature to revisit and reevaluate the Program and its effectiveness. In the absence of the sunset, there will be little

public oversight or accountability of the MEAP. The sunset should have been extended, not removed.

Legislative Analyst: Nathan Leaman

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill will have no fiscal impact on State or local government as it made the MEAP permanent. If the sunset on the statutory authority had not been extended or removed, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services would no longer have had the authority to administer the MEAP by receiving funds collected annually under the Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund.

Fiscal Analyst: John P. Maxwell

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.