



# NEWS YOU CAN USE

October 1, 2020

**SECORD LAKE ASSOCIATION**

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## **Bill sent to Whitmer would lengthen bonds for dam repairs**

By David Eggert, Associated Press Writer

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The Michigan Legislature on Tuesday finalized a bill that would lengthen the financing period of lake projects in the wake of flooding that damaged dams and drained lakes in the Midland area.

**The legislation would extend, from 10 years to 40 years,** the maximum maturity date of bonds issued to pay for inland lake-level control projects across the state. Special assessments are levied on lakefront properties and “back lots” with deeded or dedicated lake access to repay the borrowed funds.

**The change would allow project costs — such as restoring four dams and lakes in Midland and Gladwin counties — to be spread out over more time and made more manageable for property owners.** In May, a portion of the Edenville Dam failed amid heavy rainfall, and the Sanford Dam overflowed — sending floodwaters down the Tittabawassee River and causing an estimated \$250 million-plus in damage.

**Gov. Gretchen Whitmer will sign the measure, which won final approval after clearing the Senate and House 36-0 and 103-1 in recent weeks.**

The **Four Lakes Task Force**, an authority formed by the two counties and area property owners and which was close to buying the Edenville Dam at the time of its failure, has released projected property assessments to make \$338 million in repairs to four dams. Edenville Lake residents could pay between \$1,650 and \$2,357 annually for 40 years. Sanford Lake residents could be assessed between \$1,477 and \$2,110 a year.

“A lot of people that live on the lakes aren’t necessarily Dow (Chemical) executives. They’re more blue-collar, not necessarily low-income, but certainly it would be a financial burden,” said Sen. Rick Outman, a Republican from Six Lakes who sponsored the bill. Drawing out the bonding period — and subsequently the assessments — would make them financially palatable, he said.



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**The Four Lakes Task Force has estimated lower annual assessments for residents along Secord and Smallwood lakes, ranging between \$237 and \$339 for Secord and \$410 and \$585 for Smallwood.**

Backers of the legislation include the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, Dow Chemical, the boating industry and local business groups.

State environmental regulators this month ordered Boyce Hydro Power, the Edenville Dam's embattled owner, to perform critical repairs. They warned that without relieving pressure from water held back by the Tobacco River side of the dam, which could be exacerbated by a "highly likely" one- to two-year flooding event, a collapse could unleash a 10- to 15-foot wave of water downstream and cause additional damage.

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