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Opponents of entertainment ticket tax urge lawmakers to reject proposal

By [Amy Lane](#)

Opponents to a discussed 6 percent tax on entertainment are mobilizing as they did two years ago in hopes of again beating back the idea as lawmakers hash out the state budget.

Fans Against the Ticket Tax, a group that is supported by sports teams and entertainment venues in the Detroit area and other parts of Michigan, is urging the Legislature to reject the tax.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has proposed a tax on live entertainment that would raise an estimated \$87.3 million in upcoming fiscal 2010 and \$89 million in 2011, based on details of a two-year budget proposal she released earlier this month.

The governor's proposal included revenue sources like liquor license fee increases and extended-hour liquor permits; expanding the sales tax to vending machine sales, live entertainment and service contracts; raising the cigarette tax rate to \$2.25 a pack and placing a 1-cent tax on each bottle of water sold in Michigan.

Tom Shields, a spokesman for Fans Against the Ticket Tax, said that opponents need to treat the ticket tax as a possibility in the fluid Capitol discussions over cuts and revenue increases.

"I think that as long as it's being discussed, and it's on the table, we have to approach this that it will be on the table until they reach a final agreement," Shields said.

He is president of Lansing-based **Marketing Resource Group Inc.**, whose clients include the **Detroit Red Wings** and **Detroit Tigers**.

Even if lawmakers cement a budget by Oct. 1 that incorporates cuts and no major revenue increases, tax increases are still a possibility in supplemental measures that could be passed to restore or soften previous cuts.

A statewide survey of 600 Michigan voters, conducted by Marketing Resource Group, found 54 percent of Michigan voters opposed to the ticket tax, and 44 percent in favor.

Sports talk radio host Bill Simonson plans to broadcast his "The Huge Show" live from the state Capitol lawn on Thursday afternoon to protest the ticket tax, and more than 2,600 e-mails to legislators have been sent from citizens who have signed onto the opposition effort.

The group plans to hand out up to 100,000 flyers to fans attending college football games, **Detroit Lions** and Tigers home games, concerts and other live entertainment events in Michigan. Paid ads and other efforts are also being considered.

Supporters of Fans Against the Ticket Tax include the Red Wings, **Detroit Pistons**, **Detroit Shock**, the Tigers and Lions, **Michigan International Speedway** and **DTE Energy Music Theatre**.

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