



To: Senator Curtis Hertel Jr., Minority Vice Chair Senate Appropriations Committee, and Representative Jon Hoadley, Minority Vice Chair House Appropriations Committee

From: Michigan Environmental Council

Date: February 13, 2019

Re: Environmental Budget Recommendations

Energy

- Establish a home health and safety fund. Fund would allow low-income homeowners to do home renovations needed in order to also pursue weatherization programs. In Detroit 75% of all approved weatherization services are deferred because of poor housing stock, including leaking roofs, mold and moisture problems, and structural issues. This funding would create a pilot program in DHHS to grant out dollars for home improvements needed to allow a weatherization investment. Other states like Illinois for example have established similar funds. We suggest at least \$5 million for a pilot program and boilerplate to ensure DHHS reports back to the legislature on the results of the pilot program.
- Boilerplate for a study to identify brownfields suitable to host solar installations with a focus on sites of retired or retiring coal plants and closed landfills. Funding for study would go to Michigan Agency for Energy or new Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy if it is established. The study is needed to help encourage solar developers to look to Michigan brownfields as viable siting options. Similar studies cost \$100,000 to \$150,000 to conduct.

Suggested boilerplate: "The Michigan Agency for Energy, in coordination with the Department of Environmental Quality, shall conduct, or contract to conduct, a study to assess the potential for solar energy development on Michigan brownfields, in particular brownfield sites hosting closed or retiring coal plants and landfills. A final report on the study shall be transmitted to legislative committees with primacy over energy and brownfield remediation and development, and made available to the public, not later than September 1, 2019. At a minimum the study should do all the following: (A) overlay solar resource maps with brownfield sites, (B) estimate the solar energy potential and nameplate capacity available on brownfield sites, and (C) identify and prioritize the optimal brownfields for hosting solar energy development. The Agency should produce an estimate of the impact renewable energy development on brownfields would have on job creation, tax base, and economic growth."

Water

\$1 Million Water Pilot Program Ideas:

- Build out a platform/app where individuals can upload private well test results. This would start a process to ensure that neighbors and the state have a better handle on potential groundwater concerns in particular areas.

- Use the funding to seed a new well and septic revolving loan fund. Money from the revolving fund would be provided in the form of low interest loans to homeowners to repair failing septic or address well concerns.

Additional Water Funding Needs:

- Funding for surface water quality monitoring program. Michigan's surface water quality monitoring program was funded through the Clean Michigan Initiative bond funding. That funding has run out. Funding would go to the Department of Environmental Quality. Annually \$5 million is needed to run an effective water quality monitoring program.
- Full allocation of funding for contaminated site clean-up program, waste management, and recycling. At the end of 2019 the legislature approved the allocation of \$69 million to fund the Renew Michigan Fund. We request that the full amount of that funding be appropriated to the specific programs outlined in the authorizing legislation. This funding should go to the Department of Environmental Quality.
- Continuation of PFAS funding for DEQ and DHHS from the supplemental. We continue to see the need for this GF funding to tackle widespread PFAS contamination. This funding is needed in addition to the \$5 million for surface water monitoring and the \$69 million for contaminated site cleanup.
- Continue funding mapping of contaminated groundwater. In the supplemental approved at the end of 2018 the legislature allocated \$4.3 million to the DEQ to support work to map plumes of contaminated groundwater. We request that \$8.6 million be allocated to provide a full fiscal year of funding to continue this project.
- Funding to establish a PFAS standard for food and soil. The funding would cover administrative costs and research needed to set a standard and would go to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- Boilerplate for an alternatives assessment for PFAS used in chrome plating. A number of researchers and states have conducted alternatives assessments for PFAS firefighting foam, but as of yet little research has been done on what safe alternatives can be used in the chrome plating process. As the auto state, Michigan is uniquely suited to lead in this research area. We would suggest \$150,000 for the DEQ or MDOT to conduct this study. We are in the process of drafting boilerplate for this study.
- Fully meet the state match for federal drinking water revolving loan funds to leverage the most federal funding available for drinking water infrastructure work.

Natural Resources

- Fund an Office of Outdoor Recreation within MEDC. This office is meant to serve as a promotional tool for outdoor recreation in Michigan. Though it has overlap with DNR functions, the model in other states has been to tie it to economic development. The office is all about elevating our outdoor industry (biking, running, paddleboarding, kayaking, ice and snow sports, etc.) and promoting it nationwide to attract talent and show that Michigan is a good place to live, work and play. If we move now we would be the first state in the Midwest to implement an office of this nature.

- Prioritize State Park funding to help address the backlog of capital projects. We have ~\$100 million in emergency repairs needed for state parks based on recent project logs. More money needs to be dedicated to continue to cut into this backlog to ensure our state parks are properly maintained.
- Identify needs at state hatcheries in order to put in water treatment and lead to net zero discharge of pollutants like phosphorus. The state should set an example on how aquaculture can be done with minimal impact on water quality. Currently the facilities, outside of Platte River, have not been modernized to use the best treatment technologies available.

Transportation

- Ensure more funding to local transit and to passenger rail. Every dollar of new money in transportation should go through the entire Act 51 formula to ensure that transit and rail are getting their fair share. In addition, the legislature should unroll the rail line to ensure that money is being spent on passenger rail at appropriate levels.
- Add boilerplate to examine the ROI on freight rail economic development money that has been allocated in the past 5 years. Though it makes sense to invest in freight, the money in the Comprehensive Transportation Fund is split between freight rail, transit and passenger rail, so we want to make sure that the state is getting the best ROI possible between those different programs.
- Identify increased money to incentivize bike lane and other non-motorized infrastructure. A holistic transportation system that caters to all users helps reduce wear and tear and produce vibrant communities.
- Dedicate the Fiat settlement funding to electric vehicle charging infrastructure or to assist local governments and schools in the purchase of electric buses.

Health

- Continuation funding for lead abatement work in the DHHS budget. The past administration has dedicated GF to lead abatement in the state. We would recommend continuing this funding so that we can leverage federal dollars and ensure residents who need assistance with lead abatement in their homes have access to funding.
- Continuation funding for the CLEEC (Lead Commission). This funding is used mainly for pass through grants to local health departments for innovative pilots addressing lead poisoning prevention. This is in the DHHS budget.
- Meet the state match for federal CHIP dollars which provide nearly \$25 million of support for lead impacted families. This is also in the DHHS budget.