

WATER QUALITY

Michigan's network of thousands of lakes, rivers, wetlands and beaches, along with our role as key stewards of the world's largest system of freshwater lakes, ensures broad support from Michiganders for measures that protect water. Water literally defines Michigan. Michigan's vast supply of fresh surface and groundwater provides drinking water for millions of residents, drives our recreation and tourism economy, and is key to our state's quality of life. Yet every day, more water is off limits to drinking and recreation due to legacy contamination and ongoing threats that state decision-makers have failed to address. We can solve the pressing challenges hindering our ability to ensure access to safe, clean water.

Pollution Protection

Whether it is beach closures due to E. coli, or drinking water wells closed due to PFAS, water contamination still remains a major concern for all Michiganders.

Michigan Environmental Council advocates for:

- Updating rules to ensure full clean up of contamination and ensuring all values are based in the most recent science.
- Creating and implementing a statewide septic code to ensure that septic tanks are inspected and failing ones are repaired or replaced to prevent E. coli contamination in our rivers, lakes and streams.
- Funding a full response to PFAS contamination and beginning to look at other chemicals with little health data.
- Requiring EGLE to publish all test results and information gathered from other levels of government on known sites of contamination.
- Implementing programs to better monitor residential drinking water wells.
- Creating and updating a public map of all known contaminated groundwater plumes in Michigan.
- Updating our financial assurance and liability laws so that taxpayers are no longer on the hook for cleaning up after corporate polluters.



Water Infrastructure Funding

Michigan faces a wastewater, drinking water and stormwater infrastructure funding gap of about \$1 billion per year. Closing this gap is imperative to protecting our lakes, rivers and streams and ensuring all residents have access to clean drinking water.

Michigan Environmental Council advocates for:

- Funding water infrastructure to stop combined sewer overflows, removing toxic lead drinking water pipes, investing in green infrastructure, and tackling the backlog of needed infrastructure maintenance.

Water Withdrawal Program

As part of the Great Lakes Compact, Michigan created a water withdrawal program to ensure that we are being good stewards of our water resources. This tool has been underfunded and the program understaffed for some time, especially as more and more requests for groundwater withdrawals come in. We must maintain and improve our withdrawal program.

Michigan Environmental Council advocates for:

- Updating Michigan's award-winning water withdrawal assessment program to protect aquifers, streams and ecosystems from potential negative impacts from large water withdrawals.
- Providing sufficient funding to EGLE to incorporate the best available science and modeling resources into the program.

Agriculture

Algae growth in western Lake Erie gained national attention in 2014 when a toxic bloom shut down drinking water to over 500,000 Toledo residents. The cause of algae growth in Lake Erie, and other water bodies, is excessive nutrient levels. While there are several sources of nutrient pollution in Michigan, the overwhelming source in places like Lake Erie is unchecked agricultural runoff.

Michigan Environmental Council advocates for:

- Prioritizing soil health improvements to limit nutrient runoff from fields and decrease the need for traditional, commercial fertilizers.
- Allocating resources to improve soil testing and mapping capabilities to improve the economic efficiencies of conservation initiatives.
- Requiring a minimum set of conservation standards that all agricultural producers must implement.
- Refocusing the food system to encourage crop diversification through new market development and improve food access for all Michiganders.
- Restricting all new and expanding facilities in nutrient- and E. coli-impaired watersheds.
- Increasing accountability and documentation of manifested wastes.
- Strengthening winter manure application restrictions for all livestock facilities.

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