Two of the Michigan Environmental Council's signature achievements in 2016 made it clear that, as President Calvin Coolidge put it, "Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence."

James Clift, our policy director, spent five years doing everything he could to block a state plan to deregulate air emissions of 500 toxic chemicals. At times, it looked like a lost cause. But James and MEC never let up, and in March, state officials announced they were dropping the plan.

Likewise, our tenacity was key in achieving important clean energy reforms in the final days of 2016. Legislators put forward some worrisome proposals during more than two years of negotiations, legislative hearings and bill introductions. (Remember the idea to count scrap tires and railroad ties as "renewable" fuels?) But through it all, we never lost sight of our goals for Michigan's energy system: keep it affordable and reliable, protect families and businesses from future price spikes and minimize the impacts on human health and the environment. By sticking with it until just hours before the clock ran out on the legislative session, we played a major role in passing laws that accomplish those goals.

Victories of this sort require huge amounts of research, analysis and planning. Lots of strategy sessions. Countless pots of coffee. Without donors like you, we simply would not have the resources it takes to win. We can't thank you enough.

Recognizing the vital role we play in the Capitol, MEC's financial supporters in 2016 made it possible for us to hire our first-ever agriculture policy director. That means we'll have greater capacity to promote state, local and federal policies that support Michigan in growing a diverse abundance of food while promoting the long-term well-being of our water, wildlife and climate. We've long worked to make agriculture more sustainable, but this is the first time we've had a program dedicated solely to farm issues.

Generous financial support also made possible a new initiative launched in late 2016 to ensure that families across Michigan enjoy safe, affordable drinking water. We're reaching out to water experts, community leaders and residents to learn about the challenges they face and the resources they need to advance drinking water safety and affordability. Their insights and ideas will guide our work in 2017 and beyond. You can expect a progress report on these new initiatives in our next annual report.

I won't venture any bold predictions about the future—I threw my crystal ball in the recycling bin on November 9, 2016—but here's one you can take to the bank: With your continued support, MEC will keep working with grit and persistence to achieve strong protections for Michigan families and a healthy environment.

Thank you for making our work possible.

From the

PRESIDENT

Chris Kolb, President
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Chris Kolb, President
It's hard to overstate how important energy policy is to the health of our environment, our families and our economy. Fortunately—throughout more than two years of nonstop advocacy made possible by supporters like you—MEC played a major role in achieving positive energy reforms that became law in December.

Among other key provisions, the new laws:

• Require utilities to ramp up their use of renewable energy from their current level of 10 percent to 12.5 percent by 2019, and 15 percent by 2021.
• Continue the requirement that utilities improve efficiency by at least 1 percent per year for electricity and .75 percent for natural gas, and remove a cap on how much they can invest in efficiency.
• Create a new program for customers who want more of their power to come from renewable sources.
• Maintain the net metering program that allows customers to reduce their electric bills by generating clean energy at home.

From the earliest talks until the final votes were tallied, MEC was in the mix. We were asked to serve on a Senate energy work group in 2014, shared convincing legislative testimony and compelling media messages in 2015, provided insights and alternatives throughout 2016 to keep the bills moving in a productive direction and stayed at the negotiating table in the final hours before the bills passed. With your help, we were able to turn back dangerous proposals—including a plan to scrap renewable energy and energy efficiency programs—and move Michigan forward.

It was a big victory, but it doesn't mean our energy program is slowing down. We are ramping up efforts to hold utilities accountable for making investments that benefit their customers and not just their shareholders—investments, that is, in affordable clean energy. We're also working to drive renewable energy projects at the local level and helping improve energy efficiency in multi-family housing.
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Factory fish farms have no place in our Great Lakes, and 2016 yielded important progress in our efforts to keep them out. Canadian companies have proposed net-pen aquaculture—cramming thousands of fish into floating cages and fattening them on food pellets—near Rogers City and Escanaba. These commercial operations pose a serious risk to wild fish populations, water quality and recreational value of our greatest natural resource. And they would create just 44 jobs, compared to 38,000 jobs supported by recreational fishing in Michigan.

In February—on the same day we testified in support of bills to ban net-pen aquaculture in Michigan’s Great Lakes waters and opposed legislation that would roll out a welcome mat for the industry—a statewide poll revealed that nearly seven in 10 Michiganders want to keep fish farms out of the Great Lakes. In March, a trio of state agencies recommended that Michigan do just that.

MEC and our partners kept a close eye on this issue and the year wound down without legislative action on fish farms. We were happy to pour cold water on these proposals in 2016, and we’re confident we can achieve a permanent ban on Great Lakes aquaculture in 2017.

MEC used scientific and economic arguments to successfully fight proposals for net-pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes. A state science panel found that net-pen aquaculture would dump untreated waste directly into the Great Lakes, provide a breeding ground for diseases that could spread to wild fish, and allow interbreeding that could encourage the weakening of genetic diversity and traits that help wild fish survive.
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In December, Traverse City made a bold commitment to clean energy with a resolution to power city operations—including city buildings, streetlights, traffic signals and water treatment facilities—entirely with clean energy by 2020. The resolution also set a goal of launching two greenhouse gas-reduction projects each year and called for a plan to make all of Traverse City—not just city operations—carbon-neutral by midcentury.

MEC climate and energy specialist Kate Madigan, a Traverse City resident, was instrumental in this exciting victory. As director of the Michigan Climate Action Network, Kate met regularly with city leaders and officials from the local electric utility and brought in outside experts to help make the case for going fully renewable. With your help, by the end of 2018, Kate aims to increase to 10 the number of Michigan communities with 100 percent clean energy commitments. Along with Traverse City, Grand Rapids and Northport have already made such pledges.

Workers install solar panels at Traverse Heights Elementary School. Kate Madigan, MEC’s energy and climate specialist and director of the Michigan Climate Action Network, was instrumental in bringing solar power to the school, and has been a leader in Traverse City’s transition to 100 percent renewable energy.
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STANDING STRONG for Clean Air

MEC notched a hard-won, long-fought victory for Michigan families in April when the Department of Environmental Quality abandoned a plan to deregulate air emissions of some 500 toxic chemicals. The rule change would have allowed unchecked emissions of 250 chemicals that have never been tested for their impact on human health and could be cancer-causing. Polluters also would have been allowed to emit any quantity of another 250 chemicals that are known to be somewhat toxic, despite the fact that, at high enough levels, even mildly toxic chemicals can have serious health impacts.

Financial support from friends like you gave MEC the tools we needed to battle this bad idea over the long haul—about five years, all told. You helped us to build a strong scientific case against deregulation, alert journalists to the proposal, publish op-eds opposing the plan in the state’s biggest newspapers and—most importantly—stick with it, day after day, month after month and year after year. The result: cleaner air for Michigan families.

Policy Director James Clift repeatedly testified — and was often a lone voice — against deregulating toxic air chemicals. The fight for clean air ended with a major win for Michigan families.
Along with shaping statewide policy at the Capitol, MEC also had a significant on-the-ground impact in Detroit in 2016. Since 2013, Community Engagement Director Sandra Turner-Handy has been among the leadership team for a program that challenges Denby High School students to identify, plan and implement projects to stabilize and transform their neighborhood. As part of that effort, students have been planning the revitalization of an abandoned playfield adjacent to the school. Sandra helped lead Denby students in making that vision a reality through a partnership with Life Remodeled, a Detroit-based nonprofit that brings an influx of cash, labor and materials into a different neighborhood each year. Life Remodeled brought a stunning 10,700 volunteers to the Denby community for a $5 million neighborhood renovation funded by businesses, community organizations, individuals and state grants. Skinner Park now features basketball, pickleball and volleyball courts; a solar-powered performing arts pavilion; and green infrastructure elements to capture and filter stormwater. 

In addition to improving the park, volunteers—including a team from MEC—removed blight from more than 300 city blocks, boarded up 362 houses and made repairs at 80 others. Sandra was instrumental throughout this process, including helping students craft their plans for Skinner in 2013, speaking with the media at the project launch, leading volunteers and, even doing the hands-on work of preparing park facilities for the winter.

**INSPIRING YOUNG LEADERS**

The Denby Neighborhood Project puts youth leadership at the center of community revitalization efforts. The $1.4 million Skinner Park project transformed the playfield next to Denby High School into a community gathering place. It includes a solar-powered performing arts pavilion with a rain catchment system. 

Bottom left: Leadership team members Charles Cross of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (left) with Hakeem Weatherspoon and Sandra Turner-Handy. 

Bottom right: Sandra Turner-Handy with Life Remodeled CEO Chris Lambert and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan.

Photos: (bottom left) James Ribbron;  (bottom middle right) Brendon Ross
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Bottom right: Sandra Turner-Handy with Life Remodeled CEO Chris Lambert and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan.
Our supporters enabled MEC and allies to block a sneak attack on Michigan’s public lands and wildlife in 2016. The Senate bills packaged together several anti-science, anti-forest and anti-public land provisions, including a few we had shot down in recent years. They featured, for instance, a proposal to prohibit public land management to preserve biological diversity—a measure opposed by more than 100 Michigan scientists and which Gov. Snyder had already vetoed once before. The bills also would make it harder to protect ecologically sensitive areas from off-road vehicles, require a minimum annual timber harvest on state forests and make it easier to put Michigan’s public forestland up for sale.

Working with our conservation partners, MEC shared our concerns with lawmakers, testified before legislative committees and met with Snyder administration officials to discuss how the bills jeopardized Michigan’s outdoor heritage. The session wrapped up without a House vote on the bills, but they cleared the Senate, and we expect to face them again. This is time-intensive, research-heavy work that is only possible with the help of our financial supporters.
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Brad Garmon, director of conservation and emerging issues, lead our work to combat anti-public lands legislation. The legislation would have required a minimum annual timber harvest on state forests and made it easier to put Michigan’s public forestland up for sale.
In March, MEC President Chris Kolb stood before a crowd of journalists from across the country and delivered a clear message: The Flint water crisis was a case of environmental injustice, and state government was chiefly responsible.

Chris was speaking as co-chair of the Flint Water Advisory Task Force, which Gov. Snyder created to investigate the crisis and recommend steps to prevent similar disasters. Since serving on the task force, he has shared his perspective with White House science advisors, a national gathering of water engineers and several other groups, challenging them with the reality that a Flint-like catastrophe can happen any place where policymakers fail to invest in safe drinking water or take it for granted.

Throughout 2016, MEC advocated for policy reforms identified in the task force report, such as making Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule for drinking water the strongest in the country. We also began reaching out to communities around the state to learn what additional policies, programs and investments are needed to help them deliver safe drinking water to residents. We continued to advocate for expanded lead testing of Michigan children and greater state investment in proven programs to prevent lead poisoning.

And we held our annual meeting of MEC member groups in Flint, where heart-wrenching stories from local activists and lawmakers drove home the magnitude of human suffering triggered by the crisis.

Providing Flint residents the support they need and working to make drinking water safe statewide will be important priorities for MEC in the coming years. It's another way our financial supporters will make a real difference in the lives of Michigan residents.
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FEEDING FAMILIES and Supporting Small Farmers

MEC and partners launched a promising pilot project in 2016 that we hope will prove effective in tackling hunger and childhood obesity while supporting sustainable farmers. About one in four children in our state suffer from hunger, and about a third are overweight or obese, often because of poor access to healthy foods. In a state with the nation’s second-highest diversity of food crops, we can fix this problem with the right policies and investments.

Supported by a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, this initiative will provide fresh, local fruits and vegetables for 120 families struggling with food insecurity. The food will come from growers who operate Community Supported Agriculture subscription programs in the Lansing, Detroit and Ann Arbor areas, and will be delivered to participants in a weekly “veggie box.” If this approach proves to be as effective as we think it will in expanding healthy food access, we will apply the lessons we learn during the pilot phase and work with partners on the ground to expand the program statewide.

This initiative is just part of our work through the Healthy Kids Healthy Michigan coalition, whose aim is to reduce childhood obesity. With support from friends like you, we are making important strides toward a future in which all Michigan children have ample and consistent access to healthy foods that nourish their growth, learning and development.

Health Policy Director Tina Reynolds leads our work with the Healthy Kids Healthy Michigan Coalition to increase access to healthy food for Michigan families and children in underserved areas.
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**HONORING Outspoken Environmental Champions**

Our Annual Environmental Awards Celebration is not only an important source of funding for MEC’s programs. It’s also a chance to catch up with old friends, make new ones and soak up inspiration and motivation from our honorees. In July we were proud to honor two individuals who are the embodiment of dedication, courage and public service.

Mona Hanna-Attisha is a hero of the Flint water crisis. A pediatrician steeped in principles of environmental justice, she analyzed public health records and discovered a doubling of blood-lead levels after Flint switched its drinking water source. When state officials tried to discredit her, Hanna-Attisha stood by her data and became a prominent, unwavering voice for Flint residents.

Volunteering on a full-time basis with Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South Central Michigan, Pam Taylor has made it impossible to ignore the links between industrial agriculture and the degradation of water resources. She used Freedom of Information Act requests to build the first comprehensive database of factory farms in the Western Lake Erie Basin, confirming her suspicion that manure from industrial feedlots was a major, largely overlooked driver of Lake Erie’s algae problem. That effort also highlighted the huge federal subsidies pouring into the region’s megafarms, even as they violated the Clean Water Act.

Some 78 organizations and 170 households generously supported the event through sponsorships, donations, admissions, and auction contributions and purchases, making the celebration a financial success—and a lot of fun!
Michigan Environmental Council member groups from across the state gathered in September 2016 for our annual meeting—this time in Flint. They had the opportunity to hear directly from key experts regarding Flint’s drinking water, including Virginia Tech researcher Marc Edwards; Flint Water Advisory Task Force co-chair Ken Sikkema; Dr. Laura Sullivan, professor of Mechanical Engineering at Kettering University and member of the Flint Water Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee; and Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint).

These leaders—as well as MEC member group panelists and other special guests—made for a full and interesting agenda. The annual meeting offers opportunities to hear about the great work other member groups are doing; give input on policy priorities for the 2017-18 legislative session; and make connections with organizations from across the state to combine forces, further our missions, and be inspired.

Virginia Tech researcher Marc Edwards spoke via teleconference to MEC Member Groups during a panel discussion on Flint’s drinking water.
WHO WE ARE

2016 Board of Directors

Chris Kolb, President
Michigan Environmental Council

Christine Green, Chair
At-Large Member

Christopher Graham, Secretary
At-Large Member

Keith Cooley, Treasurer
At-Large Member

Lisa Brush, Vice Chair
Stewardship Network

Alexander (Sandy) Lipsey, Vice Chair
At-Large Member

Terry Miller, Vice Chair
Lone Tree Council

Rick Bunch
At-Large Member

Bryan Burroughs
Michigan Trout Unlimited

Rachel Hood
West Michigan Environmental Action Council

Tyler Nickerson
At-Large Member

Cedric Richner III
At-Large Member

Laura Rubin
Huron River Watershed Council

Jack Schmitt
Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

Grenetta Thomassey
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Yvonne White
NAACP – Michigan State Conference

Our Staff in 2016

Chris Kolb, President & CEO

Judy Bearup, Office/Building Manager & Assistant to the President

Joe Bower, Director of Development

James Clift, Policy Director

Andy Draheim, Director of Finance

Elizabeth Fedorchuk, Editor

Brad Garmon, Director of Conservation & Emerging Issues

Sean Hammond, Deputy Policy Director

Kate Madigan, Northern Michigan Representative & Energy Specialist

Andrew McGlashen, Communications Director

Sarah Mullkoff, Energy Program Director

Kajal Ravani, Transportation Associate

Tina Reynolds, Health Policy Director

Elizabeth Treutel Callin, Policy Associate

Sandra Turner-Handy, Community Engagement Director

Tom Zimnicki, Agriculture Policy Director

Affiliated Staff

Laurel Burchfield, Transportation for Michigan Coordinator

Galen Hardy, Zero Waste Detroit Community Outreach Coordinator

Hakeem Weatherspoon, Denby Playfield Youth Engagement Associate
Our staff’s persistence was an essential ingredient in MEC’s achievements last year. So were the backing and trust of supporters like you.

All year long, hundreds of donors, volunteers, partners and member groups generously contributed funds, talents and expertise. Every one of these contributions supported our pursuit of policy solutions—some of which were realized in 2016, others that will be attained in the future and all of which will protect Michigan families and natural resources for decades.

Your support also sent an encouraging message that you believe in MEC and our mission. Without you, we could not have completed our 37th year of advocating in the State Capitol and across Michigan on behalf of our environment and the well being of our fellow residents.

We hope the accounts in this report reinforce your conviction that MEC represents a strong investment in shaping Michigan’s future. And we hope we can count on your continued partnership. Together, we can make our state an even better place to live, work and thrive.
### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
**For the 12 Months Ended December 31, 2016**

#### UNRESTRICTED OPERATIONS

##### REVENUE
- Grant Support: $1,831,415
- Annual Giving: $101,074
- Events: $119,465
- Endowment Support: $154,103
- Great Lakes Endowment Support: $7,500
- MEC Action Fund Support: $0
- Member Dues: $12,950
- Interest and Miscellaneous: $23,177

**TOTAL REVENUE**: $2,249,684

##### EXPENSE
- Compensation: $1,185,195
- Professional Fees: $49,981
- MEC Payments to Member Organizations: $121,935
- Non-Member Sub-Grant Contractors: $352,964
- MEC Energy Policy Passthrough: $266,649
- Office Expenses: $153,186
- Travel, Seminars and Events: $122,375

**TOTAL EXPENSE**: $2,252,285

**UNRESTRICTED OPERATIONS**: $-2,601

#### TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED OPERATIONS

- Awarded Grant Revenue: $2,310,416
- Endowment Giving: $0
- Endowment Net Earnings: $121,476
- Action Fund Giving: $0
- Action Fund Net Earnings: $3,342
- Transfers to Unrestricted Operations: $-1,668,225

**TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED OPERATIONS**: $767,009

#### EXCESS REVENUE

- **STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS**
  **December 31, 2016**

##### ASSETS
- Unrestricted Cash Assets: $379,511
- Cash/Certificates of Deposit/Money Market: $853,620
- Total Temporarily Restricted Assets: $1,573,960
- Unrestricted Property Net Assets (Bldg & Equipment): $494,366
- Endowment Assets at Fair Market Value: $2,104,163
- Action Fund Assets at Fair Market Value: $70,973
- Prepaid Expense: $8,665

**TOTAL ASSETS**: $4,631,638

##### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
**TOTAL UNRESTRICTED LIABILITIES**: $324,906
- Total Temporary Restricted Net Assets: $1,573,960
- Total Endowment Net Assets: $2,104,163
- Total Action Fund Net Assets: $70,973
- Unrestricted Net Assets: $321,660
- Unrestricted Property Assets: $235,976

**TOTAL NET ASSETS**: $4,306,732

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**: $4,631,638

#### PERE MARQUETTE FUND ENDOWMENT ACTIVITY
**February 22, 2005 through December 31, 2016**

##### BEGINNING BALANCE**: $0

##### ADDITIONS
- Transfers from MEC unrestricted net assets: $300,000
- Contributions: Cash: $1,601,890
- Contributions: Pledges: $260,000
- Earnings and Capital Appreciation: $1,133,315

**DEDUCTIONS
- Management Fees: $98,429
- Transfers to support MEC unrestricted activities: $1,092,613

**ENDING BALANCE**: $2,104,163

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Thank You for
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