



# Policy Priorities 2015 – 2016

Michigan Environmental Council will focus its energy on the following priorities in the new legislative session. These and other goals emerged after five regional meetings with MEC member groups and partners statewide. At MEC's annual meeting in October 2014, member groups identified this final priority list as the most important set of issues to address in the near term.

## Water

### Protect Michigan's high-quality water resources and restore impaired waters.

Establish new funding sources for water-quality monitoring to replace bond money that will run out soon.

Reduce nutrient loading into the Great Lakes

- Expand adoption of agricultural best practices to reduce farm runoff.
- Preserve and restore floodplain features that allow heavy rains to replenish aquifers, rather than discharging nutrients into waterways.
- Prevent nutrient loading from failing septic systems by adopting a statewide septic code and requiring septic-system testing when homes are sold.

Protect Michigan waters from hazardous chemicals.

- Develop a plan to address the risk to drinking water from more than 7,000 leaking underground storage tanks in Michigan.
- Open a public proceeding regarding a 61-year-old pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac to determine if Enbridge has taken all reasonable steps to protect the Great Lakes from a devastating oil spill.

Improve Michigan's award-winning water withdrawal assessment program.

- Provide sufficient staffing for the program.
- Monitor and incorporate the best available science and computer modeling technology.

Enact regulations that protect the quality and quantity of Michigan's water from the impacts of high-volume hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

## Energy

### Accelerate Michigan's transformation to a clean-energy future.

Increase Michigan's renewable-energy and energy-efficiency standards.

- Increase the current 10 percent renewable-energy standard by 1.5 percent annually for the next 10 years.
- Increase the current energy-efficiency standard (one percent annual electricity savings and .75 percent annual natural gas savings) to 1.5 percent annual electricity savings and one percent annual natural gas savings.
- Develop a power supply plan that will:
  - Control costs
  - Minimize risk
  - Protect public health and natural resources
  - Promote economic development in Michigan
  - Preserve excellent reliability

Educate all communities on the harmful effects of fossil-fuel energy production facilities.

Develop and implement a strong state carbon-reduction plan to comply with the federal Clean Power Plan.

# Natural Resources

**Preserve, celebrate and protect Michigan's wild and scenic lands and parks.**

Establish a narrow and clear set of criteria for the DNR's determination of what land is "surplus," and provide early public notification when significant sales of state land are requested, pursued or discussed.

Protect and enhance iconic "Pure Michigan" places for future generations.

- Expand the network of designated special places by advocating for 5–10 new state designations that preserve wilderness values, maintain wild and scenic character and provide world-class opportunities for low-impact, non-motorized outdoor recreation.
- Follow up on the DNR director's 2014 commitment to identify special places on public lands that should not be leased for oil, gas and mineral development.

Lift the legislative cap on total acreage of state-owned public land, and work to ensure the state provides more public lands in close proximity to urban population centers, where access to open space and natural resources is limited or difficult.

Ensure that state-owned oil, gas and minerals revenue continues to be directed for conservation and natural resource protection. Work to eliminate the cap on the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and provide greater transparency on funds invested by the State Park Endowment Fund, improving stewardship of public land and recreational assets and reducing the backlog of needed repairs and updates to our state park lands and infrastructure.

# Transportation

**Build the modern transportation system Michigan needs to compete in the new economy.**

Ensure voter approval of ballot initiative to raise \$1.3 billion for Michigan's complete transportation system.

Secure a long-term, sustainable funding source for operation of the Southeast Michigan Regional Transit Authority.

Dedicate a larger portion of the Michigan Transportation Fund to the Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF) to support Michigan's complete transportation system.

Identify new funding opportunities for non-motorized transportation and public transit projects.

Increase state funding for local bus operating expenses.

Increase federal funding for Michigan transportation, particularly rail, non-motorized and transit projects.

# Public Health

**Ensure that homes and communities provide safe environments for all Michiganders to live healthy, active lifestyles.**

Increase access to healthy food for Michigan families and children in underserved areas.

End lead poisoning in Michigan by securing state funding to make homes lead-safe, educate residents about lead safety, and identify and test at-risk children for lead poisoning.

Maintain Michigan's current program designed to protect neighborhoods from air emissions containing toxic chemicals.

# Recycling

**Make Michigan a recycling leader with a state-wide recycling rate of 50 percent by 2020.**

Secure continued funding for the statewide recycling initiative in the 2016 Department of Environmental Quality budget.

Establish an aggressive and achievable recycling rate in the Governor's Recycling Council's final recommendations.

Update county solid waste plans to facilitate increased recycling.

# Detroit

**Create a vibrant, resilient Detroit where residents enjoy safe, clean and healthy neighborhoods.**

Align efforts to redevelop and repurpose vacant land and structures with practices that create a safe, clean, healthy, resilient and sustainable city.

Develop an urban agriculture policy for Detroit that provides food security through improved access to healthy food choices and opportunities to grow and buy local food.

Secure adoption of a greenhouse gas-reduction policy in Detroit.

Incorporate sustainability and resiliency into the city's Master Plan.

Develop environmental justice metrics to improve reporting of environmental injustices and a database to map statewide environmental justice issues.

End waste incineration in Detroit by educating residents and expanding recycling opportunities.