

Charter Township of Oxford

May 2, 2023

Michigan House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
100 N. Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Members of the Michigan House of Representatives:

I am writing to you today in support of the bipartisan effort by State Representatives Angela Witwer, Tyrone Carter, and Patrick Outman to reform Michigan's aggregate mining permitting system so we can get more roads fixed, quickly. We strongly encourage you to do the same.

Studies show that Michigan's roads, bridges, and other infrastructure have been some of the worst in the United States because, for too long, our level of public investment did not match the level of disrepair.

We didn't need a study to tell us our infrastructure was poor as we drive these roads every day. That is why Gov. Gretchen Whitmer made Fixing the Damn Roads a priority for her administration and why she committed \$3.5 billion for her plan to start a process of renewal. But we must do more by being more efficient with the tax dollars currently invested in road repair. We have recently learned that over \$700 million of the \$3.5 billion will be wasted on excessive transportation costs of aggregate material, taking dollars out of our roads.

By supporting the bipartisan plan to move the aggregate mining permitting system to the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), **a plan supported by Gov. Whitmer**, we can fix this wasteful approach.

Why is moving aggregate permitting to EGLE so important? Under the current system, local governments are being placed under great political pressure to deny a huge number of sand and gravel mining permit requests. This is resulting in endless delays and denials that are pushing aggregate mining farther and farther away from our biggest public construction projects. It is my opinion that the problem is not the mining operations as we have several in Oxford Township, it is the trucking. More extensive truck travel time will continue to exacerbate this problem in other communities that have no mines.

When we combine high demand for sand and gravel with a consistent opposition to accessing aggregates close to major infrastructure projects, costs go up rapidly. This is true not only because high demand and decreasing supply causes price inflation, but also because sand and gravel must be hauled from longer distances, greatly increasing delivery costs.

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These local battles hurt our environment, too. Because when trucks are forced to drive much longer distances, they, of course, emit far more carbon dioxide into the air we breathe.

By supporting the bipartisan legislative plan to place aggregate permitting in the hands of the environmental experts at EGLE, we would treat aggregate mining permitting like many other extractive industries already supervised by EGLE, save over a billion dollars that can be put directly into road repairs, slash the amount of air pollution caused by long hauls, require that all noise, air and water protection requirements are met, protect private property rights, mandate post-mining land reclamation, and still include local input at the state level.

Simply put, we cannot continue to waste over a billion dollars annually in transportation costs for road building materials! We are blessed to have these resources here in Michigan and need to use them to rebuild the state's infrastructure. We can do that with the passage of these bills.

This bipartisan reform effort is vital to getting more infrastructure repaired and growing our skilled trades labor force, too.

That is why Michigan's leading unions, including the Operating Engineers, Teamsters and Laborers, have joined forces with Michigan's leading business groups, such as the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, to form the Build It Michigan Strong coalition. They support Representatives Witwer, Carter, and Outman, and the many legislators from both parties who have already co-sponsored this legislative package.

We also support Representatives Witwer, Carter, and Outman in their bipartisan effort to fix the aggregates supply chain, fight inflationary costs, and get more infrastructure repaired.

We strongly encourage that you do, too.

Sincerely,

Jack Curtis
Supervisor