



SIERRA CLUB

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

To: Chair Laurie Pohutsky and Members of the Committee

RE: Sierra Club Support For Senate Bill 14

On behalf of our 150,000 Sierra Club members and supporters in Michigan, we support the proposed legislation to repeal the disastrous “No Stricter than Federal,” law signed by Governor Snyder. Repealing No Stricter Than Federal is the first step we must make to restore Michigan’s role as a national leader in environmental protection. As the Great Lakes State, we have a mandate to go further and farther to protect one-fifth of the world’s surface water. Constituents across the state have provided our government with a clear mandate to ramp up the protections that have been steadily eroded for decades. Michigan families are not interested in waiting for Washington D.C. to make decisions that will impact our communities. We must return to our role as a strong watchdog of our air, land, water, and public health, and we cannot take on this role when our state agencies are hamstrung to only the federal standards.

We have always known that Federal standards are the bare minimum - they are intended to be the foundation on which scientists, stakeholders, and citizens can build stronger protections to meet the state's needs. Federal regulations are written as “one size fits all”, with no particular accounting for the sensitivities and fragility of the world's most important freshwater resources: The Great Lakes and its interconnected ecosystems. And in Michigan, we are not about the bare minimum.

From our strong wetlands protections established under Governor Milliken, to our current cutting-edge work to control industrial discharges of PFAS contamination, to our previously nationally lauded polluter pay legislation (decimated by the Engler administration in the 1990s), Michigan has a history of leading the rest of the country in establishing strong public health and environmental protections that have helped set the standard for further federal action. The EPA recently announced new federal PFAS standards. Luckily those standards were stronger than Michigan. However, if those standards were weaker than what Michigan has already established, we would have to roll back our stronger standards and leadership on PFAS because of our no stricter than federal law.

Michigan issues require Michigan solutions. Our state agencies need to have the authority to ensure the best protection of our communities and our unique natural resources. We can’t guarantee that every federal administration will have the interests of Great Lakes Protections driving EPA decision-making, and the last thing we should do is leave a terrible law on the books that cede the final say on Great Lakes Protections to the feds and the feds only. With the swift repeal of “no stricter than federal” we are guaranteeing our state the authority, we need to fulfill our state constitutional mandate.

Votes pertaining to this bill will be included in the Sierra Club’s legislative scorecard.

Sincerely,

Tim Minotas
Deputy Legislative and Political Director
Sierra Club Michigan Chapter

