



michigan municipal league



MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL



SIERRA CLUB
MICHIGAN CHAPTER



June 21, 2022

The Honorable Julie Calley, Chair
Committee Members
House Local Government & Municipal Finance Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Chair Calley and Members of the House Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee:

Our organizations, representing local governments, schools and the environment, are united in our opposition to Senate Bills 429-431, currently before this committee. We ask that you oppose this legislation, which preempts local authority over sand and gravel mining operations—regardless of their location or impact on a community, neighboring residents or property owners, small businesses, schools or the environment—and also does not address the myriad environmental concerns over these operations. Further, the bills eliminate all existing local control and instead shift complete oversight to the state—far removed from the people and areas most impacted.

These mining operations can have long-lasting and far-reaching impacts on our communities, residents and the environment if not properly sited and operated. Local involvement and oversight in gravel mining operations are critical to ensure issues are addressed to the benefit of all concerned. The current system works—allowing local officials and operators to address concerns or questions regularly as they arise. Additionally, permit applications for sand and gravel mining operations have been overwhelmingly approved, with local governments working with the industry to ensure respect for the community and protection of assets and natural resources.

The Senate-passed legislation creates a top-down oversight process within the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy—essentially a state takeover of a very local issue with local impacts. Even more concerning, the legislation as written is simply a checklist of documentation that mining operators seeking a permit must submit. Rather than creating a standard that safeguards our environment, the bills instead remove local regulation and oversight from this industry. The department is not required to garner local input about the impact of the mining operation to the community or those affected, or to review operators regularly. The legislation is not responsive to concerns around groundwater contamination, noise pollution, truck routes, hours of operation, or whether the remediation plan is sufficient to restore the site after the mining company is completed.

Local governments are best equipped to address local issues and concerns. Every community should have a voice over issues impacting their neighborhoods, health, safety and quality of life.

We support access to materials necessary to fix Michigan’s roads as well as for building construction and development. The current process allows for local governments to balance those needs along with those of their community. Although the bills are modeled

after statute (Part 632) that offers local oversight over safeguards, such as truck routes and noise abatements, they currently offer no such protections or authority.

These bills strip away all local government oversight and authority in the permitting and operations of sand and gravel mining, and do not include adequate environmental protections, including impacts on neighboring wells and drinking water. We urge your opposition to Senate Bills 429, 430 and 431. Our organizations remain committed to engage in discussions for a compromise on this issue.

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