



Date: June 2, 2020

To: Members of the Michigan House Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Committee

From: Joe Fedewa, Government Affairs Manager | Nick Occhipinti, Government Affairs

Director

Re: Support for the Rewrite of Part 115 of NREPA Bill Package (HBs 5812-5817)

Chairman Howell and Members of the Committee on Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation:

Thank you for the opportunity for Michigan LCV to offer its support of the package of bills before you today, House Bills 5812-5817, that rewrite Part 115 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. These bills serve as an example of how a deliberative, inclusive process with robust stakeholder engagement can deliver sound policy improvements. While not perfect, particularly when it comes to financial assurances which should be further strengthened before signed into law, these bills will vastly improve the way our state handles solid waste disposal and how we perceive the solid waste recovery process. Michigan is long past due to shift away from a short-term waste disposal strategy that only considers proper and adequate disposal capacity.

Until this point, Part 115 has done little to promote recycling and other uses for waste beside landfill disposal. The state has also neglected to address the relatively weak financial assurances currently required by licensed disposal area operators under Part 115. With passage of these much needed reforms, we can begin to take a smarter, holistic view of this process that puts a greater emphasis on recycling and sustainable material management while assuring taxpayers will not be on the hook to cleanup or monitor waste sites if a landfill operator fails to do so.

Michigan, and the nation as a whole, has gone decades being a mostly “throwaway” society with little thought to where solid waste ends up and what the ramifications are for simply filling one landfill and moving to the next. Treating solid waste as a resource is long overdue, and assuming passage of these bills, it will undoubtedly be a strong economic tool moving forward by keeping valuable materials circulating within our economy.



It is refreshing to see the recommendations put forth by the Solid Waste and Sustainability Advisory Panel in 2017 finally turn into legislation. Too often commissioned panels and task forces are entrusted to develop thorough policy recommendations to the legislature based on expertise, only to be ignored or forgotten by the time a review of the problem is complete and recommendations are made. Additionally, we want to commend Chairman Howell and the other bill sponsors for organizing this bipartisan bill package that rewrites Part 115 of NREPA after seeking robust feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders. These bills will move us in the right direction toward expanded recycling programs and a more sustainable management of waste.

Thank you again for allowing Michigan LCV to express its support for House Bills 5812-5817. We urge the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation to swiftly pass these much needed comprehensive reforms and allow them to be considered at the next stage of the committee process. Please do not hesitate to contact our organization to provide clarification or further detail about our official position.

Respectfully,

Nick Occhipinti
Government Affairs Director
Michigan League of Conservation Voters

Joe Fedewa
Government Affairs Manager
Michigan League of Conservation Voters