

October 19, 2023

To: House Committee on Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation  
Re: Michigan Farm Bureau Testimony on House Bill 4826

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of Michigan Farm Bureau in strong opposition to House Bill 4826. Michigan Farm Bureau is the largest general farm organization in the state, representing over 40,000 farm families. Our policy positions are shaped through grassroots efforts, where local members engage in development, debate, and adoption of our policies at both county and state levels.

Michigan's food and agriculture industry contributes approximately \$100 billion annually to the economy and accounts for 923,000 jobs or about 22 percent of the state's workforce. We are the second most diverse state in the country in terms of the variety of agricultural commodities grown, and consequently have numerous processing and value-added businesses which export across the nation and around the world.

Farmers are the original conservationists. Michigan farmers are exemplary stewards and have been leaders in nationally recognized environmental programs, such as the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), United States Department of Agriculture Regional Conservation Partnership Programs (RCPP) and national ecosystem service exchanges.

We believe Michigan's regulatory structure must continue to foster economic growth by providing transparency and clarity. We also believe regulatory agencies should be subject to a review process for rulemaking decisions, based on the highly scientific and technical nature of many of these determinations. In lieu of disbanding the EGLE Rules Review Committee, the state of Michigan should reinvest in this body. This committee is ultimately a valuable tool in reaching our economic development and population growth goals. It provides an important level of transparency that encourages businesses to invest in our state, providing the jobs Michigan needs to retain talent.

Michigan Farm Bureau members share your commitment to preserving our state's natural resources and protecting the environment. However, this legislation is counterproductive, the state needs additional review of environmental policy and increased transparency, not less. As such, we strongly urge you to oppose House Bill 4826.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of our farmer members.

Sincerely,



Ben Tirrell  
Legislative Counsel  
Michigan Farm Bureau