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To: The Honorable Members of the House Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee
From: Tim Langholz, Assistant State Director
Date: June 14th, 2023
RE: Please Oppose HB 4382 and 4383 – Water Management Districts

On behalf of NFIB's small business owners across Michigan, we ask that you oppose House Bills 4382 and 4383.

Michigan's Drain Commissioners have the power to levy taxes and borrow money without a vote of the people, approval from local government officials, or the state legislature. They are the one elected official in Michigan that can levy taxes and borrow money without a vote of the people or approval from the county commission or state legislature.

As an elected position, drain commissioners are accountable to their constituents through the electoral process. These bills would take away this accountability by creating taxing authorities that have no oversight or recourse for small business owners in regard to taxes levied. While these water management boards are made up from local elected officials, they include officials elected in different jurisdictions and in some cases, unelected bureaucrats. There is little oversight and ability for small business owners to appeal the board's decisions and have their voice heard during the process of raising their taxes or having their land seized unjustly.

We appreciate the necessity of maintaining well-functioning drains and for county government to work together. However, creating autonomous authorities that can levy assessments and raise taxes and take land for other purposes is not the answer.

Right now, small businesses in Michigan are struggling. In addition to the government shutdowns of the past two years, they are dealing with labor shortages, supply chain issues, inflation, and increased government regulations that continue to drive up costs in all areas. Increasing the ways that government can tax our small businesses and take their land only slows the ability to grow our economy and stifles any new growth.

It is for all these reasons that we ask you to oppose HB 4382 and 4383. Thank you for your continued support of small businesses.