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January 26, 2016

Michigan House of Representative Natural Resources Committee
c/o Committee Clerk Joy Brewer
Anderson House Office Building, Room 325
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear members of the committee:

Food & Water Watch champions healthy food and clean water for all. We advocate for a democracy that improves people's lives and protects our environment. We are writing you today on behalf of our over 27,000 Michigan supporters.

Food & Water Watch is very concerned about the changes that H.B. 4540 would make to Michigan's Freedom of Information Act. Specifically, this bill would prevent landowners from accessing safety information about oil and gas pipelines, power lines and other energy infrastructure that runs through their property.

Our state is saddled with old energy infrastructure like Line 5, the 63-year-old twin oil and gas pipeline that runs under the Straits of Mackinac. If this pipeline ruptured it would cause irreparable harm to our Great Lakes, our economy and our communities.

There are also pipelines being proposed including the ET Rover and NEXUS pipelines which, if permitted, would bring fracked gas from the East Coast through Ohio and Michigan en route to their final destination in Ontario, Canada. This bill would leave landowners impacted by these pipelines in the dark.

The approaching 6-year anniversary of the Kalamazoo oil spill should also serve as a reminder that oil and gas companies like Enbridge have a shaky track record and that we should have access to how and where they are operating in our communities.

The water crisis in Flint has proven that our state government is asleep at the wheel when it comes to protecting our communities and our environment. If it weren't for the Freedom of Information Act request much of the information about the water crisis Flint could have remained secret, postponing this manmade disaster.

When it comes to dangerous oil and gas infrastructure, we need transparency. Concerned citizens should not be left in the dark.

Thank you for your time; please vote NO on H.B. 4540.



Mariah Urueta
Michigan Organizer
Food & Water Watch