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Michigan DEQ to Permit Development on Critical Dune Land

Michigan LCV says decision shows repercussions of bad policy

GRAND RAPIDS --- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) intends to issue a permit that would undermine the value of pristine shoreline by allowing housing and road development within 300 acres of critical dune land, just south of the Saugatuck Dunes State Park. Michigan LCV says the decision could cause irrevocable damage, and that it demonstrates the repercussions of rollbacks to the Critical Dunes Protection Act, adopted by the current legislature in 2012.

"Michigan's critical sand dunes are some of the most fragile, vulnerable stretches of land in the state. They are signature to Michigan, and require protection," said Patty Birkholz, West Michigan Director for Michigan LCV and former chair of the advisory committee for Saugatuck Dunes State Park. "When you pave over dunes, you cannot get them back. The Michigan DEQ's decision opens up Michigan's shoreline to irreversible damage."

The Michigan DEQ's decision to approve the permit application is a result of rollbacks to the Critical Dunes Protection Act, passed by the current legislature, in August 2012. The permit will allow for the construction of 17 homes and a 2-mile-long access road within dunes that are nationally-renowned for their natural beauty.

"This permit is just one example of repercussions from rollbacks to the Critical Dunes Protection Act that threaten our world-renowned shorelines, and irreplaceable habitats," Birkholz said. "Bad policy has consequences, and we need to prevent it from taking hold on Michigan's shifting sand dunes."

Michigan LCV scored the DEQ's decision as negative on "How Green is Your Governor?" See the score here: <http://www.michiganlcv.org/how-green-governor>

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