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House Committee on Oversight and Ethics Employs Backdoor Measure to Sustain a Plan to Limit Transparency

LANSING - The Michigan League of Conservation Voters stood opposed to legislation that would exempt pipeline safety information from the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as it was moved out of the House Oversight and Ethics Committee today. Without enough votes to pass the legislation, the Committee voted to refer it to the House Natural Resources Committee.

“If it wasn’t seriously concerning, it’d be comedic that the Chair of the House Oversight and *Ethics* Committee used a backdoor measure to sustain a bill restricting transparency when the votes weren’t there to support it,” said Jack Schmitt, Deputy Director for Michigan LCV. “Clearly, our oil pipelines aren’t the only place we need stronger oversight and transparency.”

As written, House Bill 4540 would limit public oversight on the safety of oil pipelines throughout Michigan just as this infrastructure is coming under increased scrutiny. Studies show that when companies are required to provide information to the public on their operations, they have fewer violations and spills. Michigan's recent history of devastating and expensive oil spills, including the Kalamazoo oil spill in 2010, which was the most costly domestic oil spill in our nation's history, demonstrates that stronger protections against the inherent risks of oil and gas pipelines are needed.

“From oil pouring into the Kalamazoo River, to a recent spill in Shiawassee County, to the aging pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac that jeopardizes the entire Great Lakes region, Michiganders know better than most the potential for devastation when pipelines

rupture," said Jack Schmitt, Deputy Director for Michigan LCV. "You would think the lesson learned from past disasters and continuing risks would be to lean toward more public oversight, not less."

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Michigan League of Conservation Voters is Michigan's non-partisan political voice for land, air and water. Visit our website: <http://www.michiganlcv.org>.