



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 31, 2014

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Environmental Groups Press State to Protect Michigan's Clean Water, Public Health from Fracking

ANN ARBOR -- The Michigan League of Conservation Voters (LCV), Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Moms Clean Air Force Michigan, and more than 25 environmental and conservation organizations called for stronger safeguards for Michigan's clean water and public health against hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, today. In a letter sent to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the groups pressed for more rigorous fracking rules that adequately protect the quality and quantity of Michigan's freshwater. Today is the final day for public input on the draft of the rules released by the DEQ earlier this year.

"Oil and gas development, including high volume hydraulic fracturing, puts Michigan's waters resources at risk – threatening our health and economic viability," said Jennifer McKay, policy specialist for Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. "The administrative rules currently proposed by the DEQ contain significant deficiencies and are insufficient to adequately protect Michigan's lakes, streams, and rivers."

Groups are asking the DEQ to require more in-depth evaluation and monitoring of water levels and water quality before, during and after fracking operations begin, and public disclosure of chemicals prior to drilling. Alongside the letter, the Michigan LCV submitted 2,227 public comments to the DEQ on behalf of members across the state. The strong turnout and widespread opposition to the proposed rules at DEQ public hearings in Grayling and Lansing earlier this month, and the outpouring of public comments demanding that fracking operations be held to the highest standards of safety reflect a groundswell of support for getting our state's rules right.

"If we want to maintain our 'Great Lakes State' image and our natural resource economy, we must address the unprecedented threats that our waters face from fracking," said Jack Schmitt, Deputy Director for Michigan LCV. "The DEQ should not ignore calls from every corner of the state to toughen up on rules for fracking operations and put into place safeguards that truly protect our clean water and our public health."

In addition to risks posed to Michigan's freshwater, fracking could lead to increased air pollution. Methane, the main component of natural gas, is a powerful greenhouse gas and contributor to high ozone levels. The release of toxic air emissions during any stage of the fracking process would be detrimental to air quality and public health.

“Any process that could increase the levels of pollution in the air we breathe should raise a red flag for Michigan decision makers,” said Wibke Heymach, Program Manager for Moms Clean Air Force Michigan. “Without strong enough safeguards against fracking on the books, we put air quality and the health of future generations of Michiganders on the line.”

View the full letter here: <http://bit.ly/1xEyO7R>

Signatories to the letter include:

Alliance for the Great Lakes, Anglers of the Au Sable, Dwight Lydell Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America, Ecology Center, Flint River Watershed Coalition, FLOW (For Love of Water), Friends of the AuGres-Rifle Watershed, Great Lakes Environmental Law Center, Huron River Watershed Council, Kalamazoo Environmental Council, Lone Tree Council, Michigan Clean Water Action, Michigan Audubon, Michigan Environmental Council, Michigan Land Use Institute, Michigan League of Conservation Voters, Michigan Trout Unlimited, Moms Clean Air Force, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, Save the Wild U.P., The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Upper Black River Council, Inc., Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, WATCH, West Michigan Environmental Action Council

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

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council speaks for our members including full-time and seasonal residents, lake associations, and businesses. We work to maintain the environmental integrity and economic and aesthetic values of lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater in Northern Michigan, as well as statewide and throughout the Great Lakes Basin. As the lead organization for water resources protection in Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Emmet Counties, the Watershed Council is working to preserve the heritage of Northern Michigan – a tradition built around our magnificent waters.

Moms Clean Air Force is a community of moms and dads united against air pollution- including the urgent crisis of our changing climate– to protect our children's health. Visit our website: <http://www.momscleanairforce.org>