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Scio Township Citizens Mark Their Territory to Stop Oil Drilling, Michigan LCV Delivers the Message

ANN ARBOR --- The Michigan League of Conservation Voters delivered its *Mark Your Territory* map to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which shows nearly 200 Scio Township residents who staked their claim and pledged to abstain from leasing their mineral rights to an oil and gas company. The map is a visual representation of the strong community opposition to West Bay Exploration's permit application to drill an exploratory oil well less than a mile from the Huron River in Washtenaw County. Michigan LCV said its *Mark Your Territory* map is a tool for local residents to organize and stand up to state law that allows permits for drilling and mining to trump local control.

"Scio Township residents are rightfully concerned about the potential impacts of drilling for oil in their backyards, near schools and less than a mile from Ann Arbor's main source of drinking water," said Jack Schmitt, Deputy Director for Michigan LCV. "We share their concerns. Michigan LCV's *Mark Your Territory* map is a tool that makes it easier for citizens to organize, and it shows that community support is not behind this effort to drill for oil."

In order to begin drilling in Scio Township, West Bay Exploration must secure an exploratory well permit and mineral rights leases for the property the well will sit on, and the 80-acres surrounding it. West Bay Exploration is circulating lease agreements to Scio Township citizens in advance of the permit decision. Opposition from local bodies of government holds little weight after the Michigan Zoning and Enabling Act, passed in 2006, largely removed local and municipal regulatory authority over drilling and mining projects.

"State law leaves communities high and dry when it comes to keeping their towns free of drilling and protecting their natural resources," Schmitt said. "Until state legislators act to restore local control over extraction projects, communities like Scio Township will continue to find creative ways to organize to protect the character of their neighborhoods, and to protect their air and water."

See Michigan LCV's *Mark Your Territory* map here: <http://www.michiganlcv.org/markyourterritory>

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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>.

Map of Michigan LCV Members' Pledges to Abstain from Leasing Their Mineral Rights

