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Local Control Loses Out as Michigan DEQ Approves Permit for an Oil Well in Scio Township

ANN ARBOR --- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) approved a permit for an exploratory oil well less than two miles from the Huron River today, despite organized opposition from local governments and concerned citizens who want to keep Scio Township free from oil drilling. More than 200 citizens plotted their pledge to stand up to West Bay Exploration's pursuit of mineral rights in Washtenaw County on Michigan LCV's [Mark Your Territory map](http://www.michiganlcv.org/markyourterritory) (<http://www.michiganlcv.org/markyourterritory>). However, state law allows extraction projects to trump local control over natural resources protections and quality of life in communities across the state.

"Today's decision is a direct repercussion of bad state policy that leaves townships and municipalities hamstrung to stop extraction projects from drilling down in citizens' backyards," said Jack Schmitt, Deputy Director for Michigan LCV. "Scio Township citizens sent a clear message to the DEQ that an oil well does not belong near a major source of drinking water and a vital natural resource. Unfortunately, the DEQ acted in the interest of the oil and gas company, rather than standing up for local citizens or Michigan's natural resources."

Community opposition to oil and gas drilling in Scio Township swelled since West Bay Exploration began circulating leases for mineral rights in Scio Township earlier this year. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, Ann Arbor City Council and Scio Township Board of Trustees all passed resolutions in opposition of the oil and gas company's permit application to drill in the area, citing environmental concerns. Hundreds of Scio Township citizens packed public hearings on the issue and Michigan LCV launched the *Mark Your Territory* tool to give community members a way to organize to prevent the oil and gas company from gaining more ground.

"The concerns of Scio Township citizens should hold more weight in permitting decisions that put their natural resources and the character of their community at risk," Schmitt said. "Michiganders need to come together to elect people to office who value Michigan's lakes, rivers and streams and who value local control over projects that present an inherent threat to our natural resources."

Michigan LCV scored the decision with a red mark on *How Green is Your Governor?* See the score here: <http://michiganlcv.org/how-green-governor>

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