



michigan league of
conservation voters

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Michigan Environmental Scorecard Released, Providing a Non-partisan Look at Disappointing 2011-12 Legislature

The statewide standard by which to measure Michigan legislators' commitment to conservation reveals some bipartisan successes, but an overall disregard for protection of Michigan's natural resources.

ANN ARBOR --- The Michigan League of Conservation Voters (Michigan LCV) released its *Michigan Environmental Scorecard* today, which scores all sitting State Representatives and Senators on their conservation and environmental voting records. The *Scorecard* is released biennially and is compiled with the rigorous analysis, review and consultation of environmental policy experts from across the state, tracking the most important votes cast to date in the 2011-2012 legislative session.

“While none of our elected officials received a zero, very few received a perfect score, either,” said Lisa Wozniak, Executive Director for Michigan LCV. “We were able to find unanimity on issues such as invasive species but there continues to be a devastating lack of real champions for Michigan’s Great Lakes, air, land, water and wildlife. The *Michigan Environmental Scorecard* gives citizens the power to quickly see whether their elected officials are representing them well on these critical issues, or not. From there, we give citizens - and our 100,000-plus members - the information and tools necessary to communicate with their legislators, accordingly.”

The online, interactive version of the *Scorecard* is available at www.michiganlcv.org. The full PDF can be found at <http://bit.ly/mlcvscorecardpdf>.

Overall, the State Legislature was below average when it came to protecting Michigan’s natural resources. The State House of Representatives averaged 48%, while the State Senate fared slightly better at 52%.

Party-line voting hurt the scores of both Democrats and Republicans, especially in the State House, as Democrats voted en masse against extending a fee collection deadline for the Department of Environmental Quality as part of their opposition to a larger budget package in 2011. This effectively denied all State House Democrats a chance at otherwise perfect scores, excepting Tim Greimel, who received a 100% on his five scored votes following his February 2012 special election. Party-line voting hurt the scores of Republicans, too, limiting the highest House Republican score to 46%, shared by Holly Hughes (R - Montague), Matt Lori (R - Constantine) and Wayne Schmidt (R - Traverse City).

On the Senate side, Steven Bieda (D - Warren), Morris W. Hood III (D - Detroit), Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D - Taylor) and Rebekah Warren (D - Ann Arbor) scored 100% on environmental votes. While the Senate had an overall score of 52%, a flurry of anti-conservation bills in late 2011 and early 2012 hurt the scores of Senate Republicans, many of whom had 80% scores through October 2011. After that, however, party-line votes to force roads through state lands, limit public recreation land ownership and weaken protections for shorelines, sand dunes, groundwater and the Great Lakes dropped their averages considerably. Bruce Caswell (R - Hillsdale) and Geoffrey Hansen (R - Hart) had the highest Senate Republican scores at 50%.

“This *Scorecard* makes clear that our legislators too often forget that Michigan’s natural resources are responsible for hundreds of thousands of Michigan jobs, billions of dollars from hunting, fishing, and tourism, and a priceless sense of pride in Michigan’s unmatched outdoors,” said Ryan Werder, Political Director for Michigan LCV. “With this *Scorecard* in hand, Michigan citizens now know who to thank when it comes to more jobs and cleaner air coming from renewable energy or a crisp Opening Day of hunting season. Of course, the next time they pack up the family only to find yet another beach closing, citizens now have the means to know who to thank for that, too.”

Michigan LCV is the political voice for Michigan’s Great Lakes, lands, air, and waters. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) organization with offices in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, and Royal Oak.

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