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Committee Votes To Clean Up Agricultural Water Use Disputes

LANSING --- The Michigan House Agriculture Committee passed a bipartisan bill to improve the dispute resolution process for Michigan's high-volume water users on a 15-1 vote today. The bill removes an opt-out provision for agricultural high-capacity well owners from the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool dispute resolution process.

"Water is one of Michigan's most important and valuable natural resources," said Jack Schmitt, Political Director for Michigan LCV. "We commend the House Agriculture Committee and Chairman Kevin Daley for taking a proactive step in improving Michigan's state-of-the-art process for handling high-volume water use, which ensures Michigan's abundant fresh water is here for future generations."

Currently, high-volume water users in Michigan can take advantage of an option to opt-out of a state administered mediation process when disputes occur over disproportionate water use. This bill, which also garnered support from the Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan Agri-Business Association, would close that loophole for agriculture, thus tightening Michigan's high-volume water withdrawal process and affirming that every Michigan farmer has a right to clean, fresh water.

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