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MICHIGAN CHAPTER

March 10, 2014

The Honorable Aric Nesbitt and members of
The House Energy and Technology Committee

Testimony regarding HB 5397 (Rep. Joe Haveman)
Committee Hearing March 11, 2014

Chairman Nesbitt and members of the Committee:

HB 5397, introduced by Representative Haveman, is the culmination of a process of community engagement, expert input and municipal leadership by the City of Holland, the Holland Board of Public Works, and the hundreds of Holland residents who participated in shaping an innovative energy plan for their community. **Sierra Club Michigan Chapter strongly supports HB 5397**, which has earned broad and diverse support because it will create opportunities and overcome barriers for municipal utilities like HBPW to implement comprehensive plans if or when their communities decide to move forward.

Over the past several years, the City of Holland has pursued a model process of engagement and deliberation over the energy future their community wishes to pursue. This Community Energy Planning process helped city officials move forward with adoption of the innovative Holland Energy Retrofit (HER) program, taking into account a wide spectrum of the community participation and input. Sierra Club was honored to be included on the HER Task Force, and dozens of Holland Sierra Club members were engaged in the discussions, information collection and educational efforts around this process, as well as the full Community Energy Planning process.

HB 5397 will allow the city and HBPW to implement a program that offers opportunities to their community members to save money on energy costs, will create clean energy jobs, and will help the city hold down the costs of capital investments in energy generation facilities in the future. By authorizing the tools in HB 5397, the Legislature will create an opportunity for smart, well-crafted programs of this sort to be implemented not only in Holland, but in the forty other municipalities that have their own electric utilities.

Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, representing more than 150,000 members and supporters throughout Michigan, urges a YES vote on HB 5397 for these reasons. Votes pertaining to HB 5397 will be included on our legislative scorecard. Please contact Mike Berkowitz at mike.berkowitz@sierraclub.org or 517-484-2372 x 13, if you have questions or need additional information.

Anne Woiwode
State Director
Sierra Club Michigan Chapter