



March 11 2014

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation
Senate Transportation Committee
Lansing, MI

RE: Support for the RTA Supplemental

Dear Senators:

The Michigan Environmental Council, with our main office located in Lansing, is a coalition of 70 environmental, conservation and faith-based organizations located across Michigan, many in the Capital area. These organizations place a high priority on transportation issues as key to Michigan's economic success and environmental prosperity.

The Michigan Environmental Council thanks you for your continued support of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) supplemental as passed by the Senate in SB 608. This version includes \$2.0 million dollars for RTA administration. This money was removed from SB 608 by the House Appropriations Committee, and needs to be added back in. These funds will play a significant role in facilitating RTA operations to coordinate transit service providers and manage regional transit improvement projects. A fully functional RTA will appreciably improve the equality and accessibility of transit services in southeastern Michigan. The RTA is a priority of the Snyder administration, and the Governor supports this gap funding to get the Authority up and running.

The \$2.0 million RTA supplemental will provide the necessary resources and certainty to attract a quality CEO and staff. Time is of the essence to get a transit plan in place, so voters will know what they will be paying for and receiving when RTA funding appears on the ballot November 4, 2016. The RTA supplemental is an ideal funding mechanism for the RTA, drawing appropriations from the General Fund instead of taking money from other transit or road agencies.

When the RTA is running at full capacity, it will draw its funding from the region. In the interim, startup funding from the state is necessary to fund key staff to prepare master transit plans, manage federal and state money, and make applications to the FTA in the future. The Michigan Environmental Council sees the RTA supplemental as the best way to provide a means for the RTA to create better transportation outcomes in southeast Michigan. We ask that you continue your support for the RTA supplemental in further deliberations and discussions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,



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