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November 29, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to you concerning House Bill 6564 which addresses off shore wind development in the Great Lakes. After a review of the legislation, we have concerns about the proposed legislation and we would like to voice our concerns and objections to the bill.

As currently drafted, the bill allows for royalty payments to the State of Michigan. These payments would then be used to "protect and manage bottomlands, enhance and restore Great Lakes aquatic environment and near shore habitats, and manage submerged cultural resources." Preference shall be given to activities located not more than 30 miles from the shoreline nearest the wind developments. In addition, the legislation creates a revolving loan fund targeting energy efficiency and renewable energy and finally several items that support state administrative functions.

These are items we would like to take issue with! With little or no local community input, especially from areas that might be impacted by the proposed placement of off shore wind farms, we feel that the fund allocations are absolutely wrong. Having several large, utility scale wind projects in our county and several more under active development we know the impact of these developments on the local communities. By having the funds comeback directly to the host communities, the opportunity to provide directed, focused funding to local communities that have the developments in their area is justified and will provide those communities with resources for redevelopment that they currently do not have. Would the City of Detroit or Oakland County like to share their new development tax base with Huron County? These revenues which are generated locally should stay local. If funds are required by the state to monitor these efforts, then a mechanism should be developed to allow the county to transfer a set portion of the funds to the state for operations. We have seen too many instances that the funds are reallocated at the state and do not serve their original purposes.

In addition, we would like to raise concerns about the limited number of local, impacted government representatives involved in the process. This bias to state control is not appropriate for projects such as this. The impacts are local and there needs to be much more local involvement in the process.

Finally, we would like to object to the attempt to minimize public input and participation in the process. We were made aware of the proposed legislation on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. The public hearing is set for the first Tuesday following the holiday. If we were cynical, we might think that this rush is meant to minimize input and oversight.

As you can see, we have grave concerns about the process of how the legislation was developed and presented and the impacts on the local, host communities. We would very much like to have more input in this legislative effort.

Thank you for your time and consideration to our objections to this proposed legislation. If we can answer any questions please feel free to contact us at anytime.

Sincerely,

David G. Peruski
Chairman