



November 30, 2010

House Energy and Technology Committee  
Lansing, Michigan

Re: HB 6564

Dear Representatives,

We appreciate your willingness to examine the issue of offshore wind development. Offshore wind development will happen in the Great Lakes, the only question is where, when and by whom. At stake are thousands of jobs and the potential to control our energy future.

In 2009, the Great Lakes Offshore Wind Council was created to identify the best potential areas for offshore wind in Michigan, ensure the public interest in Great Lakes bottomlands was protected and to identify other barriers to offshore wind energy development in Michigan. I served on that Council on behalf of the environmental community.

The Council also did an assessment of the current process for leasing Great Lakes bottomlands. Its conclusion was that Michigan's current leasing process is ill-equipped to deal with the issue of offshore wind development. The council developed a set of recommendation for the legislature on how leasing should occur for these facilities, that assisted in the development of the legislation before you today.

**The Michigan Environmental Council support the legislation, with the exception of subsections 32417(6)-(8) (page 14), regarding the issue of bottomland leasing.** The bottomlands of the Great Lakes are held in public trust for the benefit of all the residents of Michigan. We do not support delegating decision making regarding public trust lands to the adjacent county government. Decisions regarding such property should be made taking into consideration the impacts on all the residents of Michigan, not just how it impacts the residents of the county or counties that border a potential development.

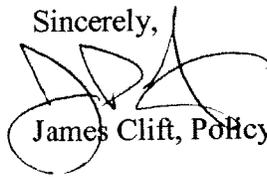
More than 60% of Michigan electricity currently comes from coal-fired power plants. Those plants result in significant public health costs and damages to our natural resources. They also result in billions of dollars a year leaving the state to purchase coal from other states.

Offshore wind has the potential to reduce the environmental impacts from power production, create jobs that put our manufacturing base back to work, and keep more of our money in Michigan rather than buying coal from others. Already, Michigan has more than one hundreds firms providing parts to wind turbine manufacturers. However, that number could mushroom if a turbine manufacturer located within Michigan. Its time to put Michigan's manufacturing base back to work and demonstrate that the expertise we have developed in the auto industry can be applied to additional manufacturing sectors. But that will take a commitment from the state that shows we are serious about building and buying power from offshore wind facilities.

Some people have voiced concern about changing the scenic vistas that our Great Lakes provide. I, personally, think wind turbines are a thing of beauty; combining grace with function. In the lakes, they would remind me of what were protecting, not what the view would be without them.

**In summary, the Michigan Environmental Council would support the legislation if section 32417(6) through (8) are deleted from the bill.** This would result in bottomlands only being eligible for lease if they were at least 6 miles offshore. We can support this limitation as a first step toward offshore wind development.

Sincerely,



James Clift, Policy Director