



February 27, 2012

Michigan Senate Transportation Committee
Lansing, MI

**Re: MEC Supports the Regional Transit Authority bill package, SBs
909, 911, 912**

Dear Senators:

The Michigan Environmental Council is a coalition of over 65 environmental, conservation and faith-based organizations located across Michigan. These organizations place a high priority on transportation issues, and particularly passenger transportation issues, as key to Michigan's economic success, good quality of life, and environmental prosperity. The Michigan Environmental Council enthusiastically supports the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) bill package, SBs 909, 911, 912.

In short, this RTA bill package offers the promise of a considerably higher level of coordinated public transportation service for the region than is currently available. This will come as the established RTA adopts a comprehensive regional transportation plan, builds and implements a rapid transit network, and develops a funding plan. These important steps will not happen without an RTA. These bills put us on the right route.

Like most legislation, this bill package is not perfect; it has imperfections. The chief issue from our perspective is the provision which mandates a unanimous board vote in order for the RTA to operate a fixed-guideway (rail) service. The RTA should be tasked with offering the most effective way for our citizens to travel around the region and not be hamstrung at the outset by unanimous provisions. We recommend that the section requiring unanimous board approval (Sec. 6 (3)(b)(i)) be amended to instead require approval by simple majority.

Again, the Michigan Environmental Council enthusiastically supports the Regional Transit Authority bill package, SBs 909, 911, 912. Thank you for the opportunity to consider our comments. As always, we are available to you to answer any questions about our comments you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Kolb".

Chris Kolb
President