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MICHIGAN CHAPTER

March 10, 2014

The Honorable Mike Nofs and members of the
Senate Energy and Technology Committee

Testimony regarding the Readying Michigan to Make Good Energy Decisions reports on Energy Efficiency (Hearing March 11) and Renewable Energy (Hearing March 18)

Chairman Nofs and members of the Committee:

The Sierra Club Michigan Chapter appreciates the Chairman's decision to hold on hearings on the reports prepared by Public Service Commission Chairman John Quackenbush and Michigan Energy Office Director Steve Bakkal regarding efficiency and renewable energy. Thank you for allowing Sierra Club to submit the following comments.

The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy reports under consideration by the Committee were the culmination of an extensive process to gather accurate information about and seek public input into Michigan's opportunities to expand on the success of the state's renewable energy portfolio for electric utilities and the energy optimization requirements for electricity and natural gas. In the end the Chairman and Director concluded that Michigan can readily grow our renewable energy standard to 30% by 2035, and ramp up Michigan's energy efficiency requirements as well.

Sierra Club urges the Committee to seize this opportunity to assure that the Great Lakes State is able to continue to grow our clean energy sector to compete effectively with other states and countries that are well on their way to achieving much higher standards. This is the prudent choice for the state's economic future, sustaining support for an industry that has employed at least 20,000 Michigan workers at dozens of companies. Equally important, as was demonstrated during the seven hearings held by the Chairman and the Director, the people of Michigan are ready for our state to embrace and build on a clean energy future. With almost 30 states having already committed to equal or higher standards, Michigan is at risk of stagnating and losing the critical momentum that the first standards set legislatively in 2008 created.

But the opportunity doesn't stop there. The growth of clean energy will facilitate the retirement of polluting, health-threatening power sources which each year cost Michiganders $1.5 billion in health costs, while sending $1.2 billion out of state to buy coal. Dramatically reducing energy waste and increasing clean renewable energy sources is a winning strategy for moving Michigan into the future.

Sierra Club applauds the work of Chairman Quackenbush and Director Bakkal and their staff for pulling together these in depth reports about the opportunities for Michigan's energy future. We also appreciate the hundreds who shared their knowledge and expertise during the public comment and hearings process, and ask that the Committee take the steps necessary to increase Michigan's renewable energy and efficiency standards in 2014 by at least as much as cited in these reports.

Please contact Mike Berkowitz at mike.berkowitz@sierraclub.org or 517-484-2372 x13 with questions or regarding any additional information Sierra Club can provide.

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