STATE OF MICHIGAN
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What's Happening in Washington?

Delegation Protests Ozone Nonattainment Designation to USEPA

Members of the Michigan Delegation sent a joint letter to Carol Browner of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency voicing concern for USEPA proposed action to reinstate ozone nonattainment designations on six Michigan counties that currently attain the standard.

At a previous meeting with the USEPA, Browner had agreed to consider several proposals to protect Michigan counties currently in ozone attainment from being unfairly designated as nonattainment. The delegation expressed support of the 1-hour National Ambient Air quality Standard applicable throughout the nation as a means to protect public health and the environment. However, the letter disagrees with USEPA's decision to ignore recent air quality monitoring data and cause unfair, needless economic hardship in these counties.

Possible solutions discussed in the meeting are to :

- Avoid reinstating designations of nonattainment for the six Michigan counties that have recent air quality monitoring data showing attainment with the one-hour standard for ozone;
- Delay the effective date of the proposed rule to give the six counties adequate time to complete the application process and have redesignation applications reviewed and approved by EPA; or
- Write into the EPA rule that nonattainment under the rule would not be designated for any county that has air quality monitoring data showing attainment with the one-hour standard for ozone and submitted a good faith redesignation plan, until the plan is reviewed and acted on by EPA.

The delegation members stressed the importance of finding a solution beneficial to both the EPA and Michigan, as well as other states which have counties facing similar situations. They concluded their letter with a request for EPA to consider adopting a fair and reasonable proposal that would alleviate the length of time, cost, confusion and uncertainty that these areas have endured with respect to their nonattainment status.

MDEQ Stresses Support of Water Pollution Program Enhancements Act

Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Russell Harding, sent a letter to U.S. Senators Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Bob Smith (R-NH) regarding S. 2417, the Water Pollution Program Enhancements Act of 2000. Harding ex-

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pressed his support for the bill's passage and implementation, as the legislation would provide federal support in three critical areas in which Michigan is working to address problems. These include:

- improving the reliability of monitoring data;
- the creation of effective nonpoint source management programs; and
- the development of defensible Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs).

Additionally, the legislation would provide for a study to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences and submitted to Congress within 18 months of enactment regarding the scientific basis underlying the development of TMDLs, their implementation costs, and the availability of alternative programs and mechanisms. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) would be required to review and consider this study and its recommendations prior to finalizing its proposed TMDL regulations.

Michigan supports the usage of TMDLs to address waterbodies that do not meet Water Quality Standards. The state has developed and submitted several TMDLs to the USEPA in the past two years, recognizing that defensible TMDLs require reliable monitoring data, sound science, and strong public involvement. Harding also stressed that it is important for states to have the necessary flexibility within the federal regulations to develop and implement innovative approaches to maintain and improve water quality.

Harding concluded by reiterating the importance of this legislation for states such as Michigan. The Water Pollution Program Enhancements Act of 2000 would assist states by providing additional resources and an important scientific review of the process. The TMDL process will be strengthened by the National Academy of Sciences study which will evaluate and provide recommendations on alternative non-federal programs such as pollutant trading programs an innovation, voluntary cooperative agreements at the watershed level. The study will also serve to address the many concerns that have been raised with the proposed TMDL regulation changes.

Michigan Delegation Secures Funding for Bovine TB

Governor Engler thanked the entire Michigan Delegation for its hard work and diligence in securing $6 million in federal funding for the fight against bovine tuberculosis in Michigan. The deadly disease was first found in 1994 in free-ranging white-tailed deer in northeastern Michigan and spread to dairy herds. Early last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture revoked Michigan's bovine TB-free status, requiring all herds in the state to be tested for the disease by 2003. The funding will benefit Michigan family farmers who have dealt with the combination of losing herds and losing the state's bovine TB-free status.



What's Happening in Michigan?

Census Workers Hit Michigan Streets

With a 70 percent participation rate from Michigan residents, the first phase of the Census is over. The second phase is underway and more than 11,000 people in the state have been hired to go door-to-door to ensure a complete count of Michigan residents. The most accurate count will ensure that Michigan receives its full share of federal funding for schools, hospitals and other community projects.

The non-response follow-up visits will continue until the beginning of July. Each Census 2000 worker will be clearly identified with an identification badge and materials carrying the official Census 2000 logo, and at no time will a Census worker ask to enter a person's home. Some states have reported incidents of individuals posing as Census workers in order to collect Social Security numbers and other personal information. Michigan residents may call the Census 2000 helpline with any questions about the legitimacy of a Census worker at 1-800-471-9424.

State Helps Launch Educational Web Site

Governor Engler recently announced a collaborative effort between the State of Michigan's Merit Award Program, Oakland Schools, Eastern Michigan University and Wayne RESA. The partnership will provide Michigan teachers with a valuable Internet resource for planning effective classroom activities.

The project, entitled the Statewide Classroom Planning and Education (SCoPE) Site Partnership, will provide daily lesson plans and other information geared for use in Michigan classrooms. The SCoPE site will include virtual bulletin boards and online forums for teachers in the state to network and exchange information.

Engler explained that the site "is dedicated to fostering greater student achievement by providing teachers with the tools they need to succeed in the classroom." The site will also include a set of daily lesson plans that are designed to provide a bridge between the state's content standards and the MEAP test. Teachers from around the state will be recruited to prepare and submit lesson plans for use on the web site which will be reviewed by education professionals affiliated with Oakland Schools and Eastern Michigan University's College of Education.

The ScoPE project is currently seeking effective K-12 teachers to prepare lesson plans for inclusion on the site. Participants will attend a two-day orientation and training session in August, and will submit up to 100 lesson plans during the 2000-01 school year, receiving $100 for each accepted lesson. Interested teachers can submit a cover letter and resume with two daily lesson plan samples by June 30, 2000. For more information, please visit the Michigan Merit Award web site at www.MeritAward.state.mi.us or call 888-95-MERIT.

Road Improvements to Drive $46 Million in Economic Development

Governor John Engler announced that road improvements which are essential to creating and retaining 600 Michigan jobs will receive targeted state transportation funds. "Local governments are teaming with the state and private industry to drive Michigan's economic renaissance with strategically-placed transportation investments. These projects reflect the importance of good roads to creating good-paying, private-sector jobs for Michigan residents," Engler said.

The eleven projects total $6,489,708 and will support private industry investments of over $46 million. The improvements are located in the counties of Kent, Barry, Allegan, St. Clair, Presque Isle, Luce, Oakland, Gogebic, Ingham, Ottawa and Wayne. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) teamed with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to select the road projects, which include resurfacing, reconstruction, new roads and other traffic safety upgrades. Selections were based on the local economic significance of the private-sector investment and job creation plans, as well as the urgency to complete the work this construction season.

Funding for the projects comes from Michigan's Transportation Economic Development fund (TEDF) Category "A," which will provide $3.7 million of the estimated costs, and local matches which will total $2.8 million. The high local match, more than twice the 20% minimum, enables MDOT to provide a wider distribution of support throughout the state. For a detailed list of TEDF projects, visit www.mdot.state.mi.us/communications

Youth Employment Guidelines Available

Summer vacation is beginning for students, many of whom will be eager to find a way to earn money over the recess. The Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services (CIS) has information available on employment guidelines and restrictions for hiring teenage workers.

A few general rules that employers must know are: a teenager must be 14 years old for most occupations unless exempt from the Youth Employment Standards Act; a work permit is required unless the teenager is exempt from the act, or employed in corn detasseling; teenagers may be employed in mot jobs except those considered hazardous; and teenage workers are entitled to a break or rest period.

For more information on these important guidelines, please contact CIS at www.cis.state.mi.us/bsr/divisions/wh/home.htm or write to The Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services Bureau of Safety and Regulation Wage and Hour Division, P.O. Box 30476 Lansing, MI 48909

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