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August 30, 2006

Senator Debbie Stabenow
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
United States

Senator Carl Levin
269 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
United States

Dear Senator Stabenow and Senator Levin:

I am writing to inform you that I have secured the commitment of key Ontario municipalities that will resolve a long-standing transboundary and environmental issue about the shipment of municipally managed solid waste from municipalities in Ontario to disposal sites in Michigan.

In brief, we have agreed to an approach that will achieve the goal of ultimately stopping the practice of cross-border shipments of municipally managed waste, consistent with the principles of stewardship and sustainability we all share.

Collectively, the municipalities in Ontario that ship waste to sites in Michigan have committed to reduce these shipments by 20 percent by the end of 2007, by 40 per cent by the end of 2008 and eliminate them altogether by the end of 2010, using the 2005 baseline of 1.34 million tonnes of municipal waste shipped. This means an elimination of about 2.78 million tonnes of waste over the four year period that would otherwise have been shipped from municipalities in Ontario to landfill sites in Michigan. It is a credit to both of you and to the leadership of these municipalities that the terms of the commitment are straightforward and the timelines achievable.

As a result of this commitment, I understand that you will not pursue passage of your amendments to the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill (SA 4657 and SA 4617), or pursue similar current or future measures, consistent with your constitutional duties.

In Ontario, municipal governments are responsible for collection and disposal of waste. The Ontario government plays a role in setting good waste management standards and policies, as well as approving environmental assessments and issuing approvals for waste treatment systems and waste disposal sites.

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I would like to thank you and your respective staffs for working cooperatively on this issue of mutual importance. I believe that the approach we have taken to resolve this issue is emblematic of the very strong relationship Ontario and Michigan have enjoyed as neighbours and friends.

Yours truly,

Laurel C. Broten
Minister of the Environment