

Senator _____

Water withdrawal legislation is currently being reviewed by committees in both the House and Senate. The versions are very similar but differ in several critical areas.

House Bill 5069 only allows water withdrawals that cause less than one percent reduction in thriving species of a cold water fishery and less than five percent in other fishery types. The Senate version, SB 860 allows withdrawals that cause reductions of up to five percent thriving species for cold water fisheries and greater amounts for other fisheries. These greater withdrawals translate to flows reduced by as much as twenty-five percent during low flow periods, the period when fisheries are most vulnerable. I care about Michigan's fisheries resources and find these increased reductions of thriving species unacceptable.

House Bill 5069 contains language that establishes a permitting process for water withdrawals affecting all types of fisheries. This permitting process opens the door for public comment on any significant water withdrawal. Senate Bill 860 has no such provisions and excludes the public and local government units from input into the process. The citizens of Michigan deserve the ability to provide input on all significant water withdrawals.

House Bill 5069 contains language that recognizes that ground water is a public resource belonging to all of the people of Michigan and subject to public trust protection. SB 860 provides no such protection. The water resources of Michigan are a valuable natural resource. Any new legislation must include this protection.

In December of 2005 Governor Granholm endorsed the Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact. In February of 2006 Michigan Public Act 34 became law. These events started the process of developing meaningful Water Withdrawal Legislation in Michigan. Provisions contained in the House version of this legislation provide for a continuation of this process. Current Senate legislation, without these safeguards, does not.

As a voting constituent living in your district, I encourage you to endorse the measures listed above that are included in the House version. I also encourage you to advocate these provisions to your fellow Senators.

Thank you

A letter to your Representative would start with: Representative _____ and end with a final Sentence: "I also encourage you to advocate the passage of this version of HB 5069 to your Fellow Representatives."