



Public Water for People Not Profit



Bill Permits Large Groundwater Withdrawals With Less Regulation & More Secrecy

**Call MI House Natural Resources Committee
Challenge HB 5638**



BACKGROUND

HB 5638, introduced on February 22, 2018 by Rep. Aaron Miller, would make it easier for businesses and farms to make large-

scale groundwater withdrawals and make it more difficult for the public to know about them, according to environmentalists.

The bill would allow businesses and farms who apply to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for water withdrawals to use their OWN experts' analysis of how these large withdrawals would impact streams and fish. Currently, groups, such as NESTLE, have been required by law to use the state's "Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool", an interactive online evaluation of proposed large water withdrawals that looks at impact to fish and stream flows through comparative data and modeling.



Furthermore, the bill makes all data submitted to the MDEQ by farmers, including amounts of water to be withdrawn, to be exempt from disclosure under Michigan's Freedom of Information Act.

"This bill is a ... shift of our state's common public waters in favor of special corporate interests", according to Jim Olson, environmental attorney and founder of the non-profit For Love of Water (FLOW). Olson further said "the way this is set up, the headwaters, lakes, streams and wetlands could be seriously harmed and nobody would be able to know about it because of the filing in secrecy".

CALL MEMBERS OF NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Representatives:

Gary Howell (R-82 Dist) Committee Chair: 517-373-1800

Beau LaFave (R-108th Dist) Majority Vice-Chair: 517-373-0156

David Maturen (R-63rd Dist): 517-373-1787

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Curt VanderWall (R-101st Dist): 517-373-0825

William Sowerby (D-31st Dist) Minority Vice-Chair: 517-373-0159

Stephanie Chang (D-6th Dist): 517-373-0823

Sara Cambensy (D-109th Dist): 517-373-0498

TALKING POINTS:

1. Michigan's water should be protected as a common good;
2. HB 5638 allows businesses and farmers requesting to withdraw large amounts of water to use their own experts to measure the impact of their withdrawals on streams and fish.
3. Brian Burroughs, Executive Director of the non-profit Michigan Trout Unlimited, said the bill would "cripple the process" of review; there will "never be a no" to a withdrawal application.
4. HB 5638 would allow our water supplies to be seriously harmed and no one would know about it because this bill allows filing in secrecy, not subject to FOIA requests.
5. Do not support HB 5638. It doesn't protect Michigan's water for ALL of its people.

MUUSJN has an environmental task force. To get involved with this group, contact Jennifer Teed at jennifer.a.teed@gmail.com

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Together, we can do great things,

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