

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Asks: Where Does Governor Granholm Stand on Urban Revitalization and Implementation of Land Use Council Recommendations?

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On Monday of this week in Grand Rapids, Governor Granholm outlined an action plan for implementing recommendations of the Land Use Leadership Council. On Tuesday in Lansing, representatives of the Granholm administration testified in opposition to a two-bill package (Senate Bills 805-806) designed to implement a key recommendation that received unanimous support from the Governor's Land Use Leadership Council.

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"The Michigan Chamber is both surprised and disappointed with the apparent flip flop by Gov. Granholm and her administration on an important recommendation of the Land Use Leadership Council that had unanimous support of Council members," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Barrett, who served on the Land Use Leadership Council. "The Council unanimously supported the need to target remaining Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) funds to support redevelopment in our urban areas."

Members of the Land Use Leadership Council included Mr. Barrett, State Senators Patricia Birkholz (R-Saugatuck) and Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor), State Representatives Ruth Johnson (R-Holly) and Chris Kolb (D-Ann Arbor), and representatives of business, local government, agricultural, environmental and other interest groups. Also, several State Department directors served in an ex officio capacity. Departments represented on the council were: History, Arts and Libraries, Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, Labor and Economic Growth, Transportation, and Agriculture.

At issue: Senate Bills 805 and 806, introduced by State Senators Patricia Birkholz (R-Saugatuck) and Tom George (R-Texas Twp). Senate Bill 805 would place \$80 million from the Clean Michigan Initiative approved in a statewide vote in 1998 into the local brownfield grant and loan program. Senate Bill 806 would establish a revolving Brownfield redevelopment fund. Both bills would encourage urban revitalization. The Michigan Municipal League is also a primary supporter of the legislation.

"Retargeting existing CMI funds toward the grant and loan program would rapidly stimulate urban brownfield cleanup and redevelopment," noted Doug Roberts, Jr., Director of Environmental & Regulatory Affairs for the Michigan Chamber. "Already, \$15 million in state investment has led to \$314 million in private investment and the creation of over 4,500 jobs. Targeting remaining dollars to the grant and loan fund will create more jobs."

"We commend both Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Grandville) and House Speaker Rick Johnson (R-LeRoy) for making this two-bill package a critical component of their land use agenda. We encourage Governor Granholm to reconsider her Administration's position on this legislation," Barrett concluded.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization which represents over 6,000 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

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