Michigan Chamber of Commerce Applauds Senate Passage of Legislation to Strengthen and Improve DEQ Rulemaking

LANSING, Mich., Jan. 26, 2018 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today issued the following statement in response to Senate passage of much-needed legislation to strengthen and improve administrative rulemaking at the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Expanding openness, accountability and transparency at the DEQ is a top legislative priority for the Michigan Chamber.

"We applaud the Michigan Senate for passing Senate Bills 652-654 to require more stakeholder involvement earlier in the DEQ rulemaking process," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Rich Studley. "This reform legislation will change rulemaking from a bureaucratic process to a more open process with participation by a wide range of stakeholders."

"This legislation will create a more cooperative rulemaking process, where stakeholders and DEQ staff will have more meaningful interactions that produce better policy outcomes," noted Jason Geer, Director of Energy & Environmental Policy for the Michigan Chamber. "Both the Science Advisory Board and the permit appeal panel will ensure that DEQ decisions are focused on the science rather than personal opinions or politics."

SBs 652-654 establishes an 11-member stakeholder committee with diverse representations from sections including environmental, conservation, local governments, medical, the general public, public utilities, small business, manufacturers, solid waste, oil and gas, and agriculture – with the power to review all proposed environmental rules and amend them if necessary. The legislation also creates a permit appeal board with members selected by the DEQ director and reestablishes the environmental science review board to ensure the protection of citizens from environmental threats.

"It's time to reinvent the top-down regulatory culture at the DEQ and we believe this legislation will get the job done," said Studley. "We strongly encourage the State House to pass this package of bills as soon as possible to keep our state moving forward."

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization representing approximately 6,400 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce who employ over one million Michigan residents. The Michigan Chamber represents businesses of every size and type in all 83 counties of the state. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process. It is one of only six state chambers accredited by the U.S. Chamber and one of only four state chambers accredited with distinction.

SOURCE Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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