

Proposed Constitutional Amendment To Mandate Use Of Renewable Energy Is Bad Public Policy And Should Be Rejected, Says Michigan Chamber of Commerce

LANSING, Mich., June 14, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today voiced strong opposition to a proposed constitutional amendment to mandate utilities to obtain at least 25 percent of their electricity from renewable energy sources by the year 2025.

"The best way to develop and expand renewable energy in Michigan is through the marketplace or the legislative process, not by amending the state constitution," said Rich Studley, President & CEO of the Michigan Chamber.

"In 2008, Michigan adopted a 'Renewable Portfolio Standard' of 10 percent to be achieved by 2015 as part of an overall state energy policy," noted Jim Holcomb, Senior Vice President, Business Advocacy & General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "Every piece of state energy law is connected and changing one piece can create problems with other parts."

"Unfortunately, during this election season, individuals seeking financial gain are willing to clutter the state constitution instead of pursuing a more thoughtful approach that focuses on the legislative process open to all stakeholders," Holcomb continued.

"Simply mandating a higher number will not increase Michigan's progress in creating renewable energy," said Jason Geer, Small Business Advocate & Chamber Partnership Manager for the Michigan Chamber. "Passage of the 2008 energy law demonstrated that there was bipartisan agreement at that time on the direction the state needed to head regarding energy policy and a renewable portfolio standard."

"The proponents of this constitutional amendment are unfortunately pushing for energy policy to be decided as a campaign issue instead of through substantive policy discussions and legislative debates," Holcomb stated.

"Attempting to amend the constitution in this instance is not a good policy making process or good government."

"Detailed energy policy does not belong in the state constitution," said Studley. "This ballot proposal is reckless and should be rejected."

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization representing approximately 6,800 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber represents businesses of every size and type in all 83 counties of the state. Michigan Chamber member businesses provide jobs to 1.5 million residents. One of every 2.6 employees in Michigan works for a Chamber member firm. The 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 four state chambers of commerce in the nation accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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