Michigan Chamber Expresses Disappointment With Executive Order, Encourages Lawmakers To Disapprove

LANSING, Mich., Feb. 4, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today issued the following statement in response to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order (E.O.) eliminating the recently established Environmental Oversight Committees. The Michigan Chamber is opposed to silencing the voices of environmental stakeholders. This E.O. will reduce public access to Michigan's rulemaking and environmental permit processes.

"We encourage the Legislature to seriously consider exercising its constitutional authority (Article 5, Sec. 2) to disapprove this E.O.," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Rich Studley. "The Michigan Chamber is disappointed that Governor Whitmer decided so early to reduce openness, accountability and transparency in the state government regulatory process."

The Environmental Oversight Committees were signed into law last year to strengthen and improve environmental rulemaking by providing for increased stakeholder involvement earlier in the regulatory process. Today's E.O. will silence the 12 recently appointed members of the Environmental Rules Review Committee representing the general public, conservation, environmental, public health, local government and businesses. This advisory committee's role was to make a recommendation to the Governor on whether a rule should move forward, leaving the final decision to the Governor. The Governor's E.O. will also eliminate the new permit appeal process that ensured permit approvals and denials were based on sound science, that the state government would have to publicly explain their decisions and that it would all be done in a transparent way.

"We are also disappointed the Whitmer administration did not make any effort to implement the new law before throwing in the towel on this important regulatory reform," said Studley.

"Expanding the openness, accountability and transparency in environmental regulations and permitting should have been a top priority for the Governor," said Jason Geer, Director of Energy & Environmental Policy for the Michigan Chamber. "If implemented, this law would have created a more cooperative rulemaking and permit process.

"Eliminating seats at the table for a wide range of stakeholders and closing the curtain on the state's environmental rulemaking process sends a negative message to Michigan's business community," stated Geer.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization that represents approximately 6,000 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. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

SOURCE Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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