Michigan Chamber Foundation Study Offers Strategies to Improve Michigan's Air Permit Process

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On the same day Governor Granholm, Speaker of the House Rick Johnson and Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema called for reforms to Michigan's permit process, the Michigan Chamber Foundation released a 17-page study that offers strategies and recommendations to improve Michigan's air permit process.

"We applaud the governor and legislative leaders for calling for permit reforms," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Barrett. "Both the timeliness and certainty of obtaining permits can have a major impact on investment decisions."

The Michigan Chamber Foundation study titled, "Improving Michigan's Air Permit Program," outlines key practices used by other states and recommends ways to improve Michigan's air permit program.

"The recommendations in this report will provide meaningful reforms for all Michigan businesses, not just a select few," noted Doug Roberts, Jr., Director of Environmental & Regulatory Affairs for the Michigan Chamber.

"The report documents that Michigan is doing a good job of issuing less complex permits in a timely fashion," added Roberts. "Where Michigan needs reforms are in the more complex permits which currently can take as long as 18 months."

The six recommendations outlined in the study include:
* Legislatively-mandate that air permits be issued within six months.

* Allow the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to use private sector contractors to facilitate the permit review process.

* Adopt federal air pollutant standards to eliminate the need for an air toxic review by the DEQ.

* Increase the number of general permits that are authorized by the DEQ.

* Adopt new source review changes proposed by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

* Prepare and distribute a report card on time frames for issuing air permits.

"It is important that Michigan continues to improve the air permitting process. Protecting the environment and issuing permits on a timely basis are not mutually exclusive. In fact, Michigan's economic future dictates that we do both," concluded Roberts.

To access the complete report, visit the Michigan Chamber's website at www.michamber.com and click on "Public Policy Studies."

The Michigan Chamber Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to plan, promote and conduct non-partisan educational research and programs regarding issues facing Michigan including, but not limited to, taxation, government regulation, health care, hazardous waste, crime, tourism and recreation, welfare, government spending and transportation.

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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Web site: http://www.michamber.com/

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