



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

March 6, 2018

House Natural Resources Committee
Lansing, Michigan

Re: HB 5638. Revision of large-scale water withdrawal rules.

Dear Representatives,

The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposes HB 5638. Michigan's Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool has served us well. This system is well regarded in the Basin and has been duplicated in other states. Michigan has long had a good reputation for water-use management. The principles of conservation and stewardship are being abandoned with this proposed bill. This bill would turn decisions and management of our shared resources over to a single user, ignoring the rights of neighboring property owners and protection of cold-water stream habitats. Good government has a role in coordinated management, monitoring and enforcement plans.

The League also strongly opposes FOIA exemptions as provided in this bill. We believe public understanding and cooperation are essential to the responsible and responsive management of our resources. The public has a right to know about water withdrawal requests and the data available for decision-making. Hearing procedures and other opportunities for public comment should be readily available. Mechanisms for citizen appeal must be guaranteed.

The membership of the League of Women Voters of Michigan urge you to reconsider this bill and support an independent review by the Department of Environmental Quality. Management of our natural resources should remain in the public interest and not be placed in private interests.

Sincerely,

Judy Karandjeff, President
League of Women Voters of Michigan