



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

May 14, 2015

Oversight and Ethics Committee
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Committee Members.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposes HB 4540. Our National organization endorsed the **Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National Government Act** which expands the accessibility and accountability of the federal government by strengthening the Freedom of Information Act and making information more readily available to the public. In response to increasing limits to citizen access to information after 9-11, the League launched a public campaign in 2005 called **Openness in Government: Looking for the Sunshine**. The objectives of this project were to broaden public awareness of threats to our rights to public information.

In 2002, Federal laws provided for security for energy infrastructure information, but protected the public's access to information about pipeline safety. Michigan FOIA laws already have a provision for exemptions for safety and security. HB 4540 goes beyond present federal and state protections already provided and protects corporations that own those lines from disclosing safety and environmental records and information that we should have access to. When the public is engaged, it increases the likelihood that pipelines will be safer.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan believes "that democratic government depends on the informed and active participation at all levels of government. Further, we believe that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by making public records accessible." The public has a right to know what is running through our backyards, schools and waterways and safety and inspection records on these pipelines. Public oversight and transparency, not more secrecy, will protect residents, communities and the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Susan K Smith, President
League of Women Voters of Michigan