



# Michigan Sustainer News

## Clean Water Action

Volume 15, No. 4 – Special Elections Edition

### A “YES” VOTE ON PROPOSAL 2 IS A VOTE FOR CLEAN WATER

After years of inaction, a bi-partisan bill won passage in the Michigan legislature to place the Clean Water Bond (Proposal 2) on the November ballot. If approved, the bond would be a significant step in fixing the state’s outdated sewer systems. Clean Water Action worked with the Michigan Environmental Council to ensure a strong proposal was placed on the ballot, including measures that provide incentives for communities to use conservation and on-site stormwater management strategies to keep rain and snowmelt from entering the sewer system.

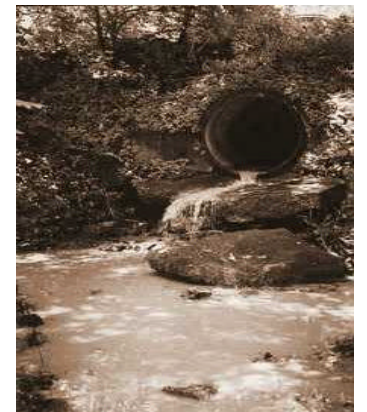
Throughout Michigan, municipal sewer systems, septic tanks, and wastewater treatment plants are in desperate need of repair and updating. In some cities sewer pipes are still made of wood and concrete pipes are crumbling. When stormwater runoff is added to the problem, **more than 50 billion gallons a year of raw or partially treated sewage overflow into Michigan’s lakes and rivers.** These overflows lead to widespread beach closings and other public health concerns.

Clean Water Action has been working for years to draw attention to the state’s failing water infrastructure and to offer common sense solutions. Last fall, Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund released a report documenting the failure by the Department of Environmental Quality to disclose to the public just how big the problem of combined and sanitary sewer overflows are in Michigan (see Table 1 on page 2). As a result of our report, state officials have adjusted their previous overflow estimate of 9 billion gallons annually upward to over 50 billion gallons.

Voting “yes” on the Clean Water Bond (proposal 2) will add an additional \$1 billion dollars to an existing loan fund which helps local governments upgrade and repair their sewer systems. While the fund currently loans about \$200 million annually, the demand for loans is around \$350 million per year, and it is expected to increase to about \$500 million annually in the next two decades. Proposal 2 will authorize the state to sell \$1 billion in bonds to supplement the existing loan fund and to start a new fund specifically for stormwater projects. The state will then pay back the bonds as local governments pay back their loans. The fund will continue to revolve allowing communities access to low interests loans to fix their sewer infrastructure. This will all be done without raising state taxes.

Clean Water Action staff and volunteers are distributing more than 100,000 “Vote Yes on Proposal 2” brochures prior to Election Day. If you’re interested in helping to get the word (and the vote!) out about this important measure, please call our Lansing office at 517.203.0754.

Supporters of the Clean Water Bond include: Clean Water Action, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, East Michigan Environmental Action Council, Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Townships Association, West Michigan Environmental Action Council, Michigan Environmental Council, and many other organizations as well as more than 125 state lawmakers.



*Proposal 2 will help stop sewage overflows into Michigan’s waterways.*

**Table 1:  
Michigan Sewage Overflows  
January 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001  
Taken from "Wasting Our Water Wonderland," by Clean  
Water Action, October 2001\***

**Summary of MDEQ Website and Health Department  
Survey Response Data (32 of 45 responded)  
OVERFLOW EVENTS AND GALLONS BY COUNTY**

<b>County</b>	<b>Total Events</b>	<b>Total gallons reported by MDEQ</b>	<b>Total gallons reported by HD</b>
ALLEGAN	2	46,000	0
BARRY	15	162,182	66
BAY	30	364,565,750	274,006,750
BENZIE	1	0	250,000
BERRIEN	67	78,094,340	61,146,640
BRANCH	1	3,000	0
CALHOUN	4	3,115	0
CASS	1	12,000	0
EATON	4	4,627,000	45,000
GENESSEE	86	82,354,900	57,713,811
GRAND	2	5,000	0
TRAVERSE			
HILLSDALE	2	39,000	0
HURON	2	1,550	0
INGHAM	95	1,161,963,110	1,113,908,560
KALAMAZOO	2	4,200	0
KENT	47	28,244,460	27,505,100
LAPEER	7	500,600	0
LENAWEE	20	52,930,883	40,503,760
LIVINGSTON	5	67,500	0
MACOMB	159	2,007,803,010	3,412,721,573
MASON	33	2,486,696	2,356,251
MUSKEGON	11	27,967,000	0
OAKLAND	80	170,327,766	713,248,765
OGEMAW	1	18,000	0
OTTAWA	2	350	0
SAGINAW	30	881,252,973	865,348,000
SANILAC	5	6,372,250	5,200,000
ST. CLAIR	44	211,775,150	230,131,150
TUSCOLA	1	0	899,000
VAN BUREN	1	3,600	0
WASHTENAW	15	7,835	2,550
WAYNE	329	17,964,700,645	45,070,213,862
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>23,046,339,865</b>	<b>51,875,200,838</b>

**NOTES:**

1. Health Department (HD) data, which was obtained from 32 out of 45 departments, was obtained via Freedom of Information Act requests
2. MDEQ data was obtained from the MDEQ website as of July 23, 2001

**\*The full report can be viewed in the Michigan section of our website at [www.cleanwateraction.org](http://www.cleanwateraction.org)**

**Clean Water Action** is a national citizens' organization working for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health-threatening pollution, creation of environmentally - safe jobs and businesses, and empowerment of people to make democracy work. Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups, coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life. This update was prepared for our Michigan members who contribute at the sustaining level of \$60 or more.

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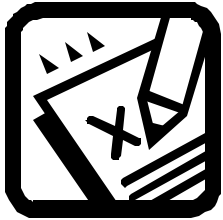
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# ***VOTE ENVIRONMENT ON ELECTION DAY!***

Clean Water Action (CWA) members tell us that they appreciate learning about candidates for public office from our vantage point. Many members find this information helpful in forming their Election Day decisions about which candidates to support. This year, the environmental stakes are extraordinarily high. Term limits are taking effect for the first time in the Michigan Senate, and a number of Michigan House members also face this forced retirement. Redistricting, which happens once each decade, has significantly altered the state's political boundaries in 2002, and most pundits agree that the legislature is up for grabs. CWA is in the midst of the electoral fervor in our efforts to win an environmental majority.

*So, how do voters cut through the "green rhetoric" to support the true environmental candidates?* Election season has suddenly made all candidates in the Great Lakes State supportive of clean water! They certainly can read the polling data. Perhaps you can imagine how surprising this is to CWA staff and volunteers who actively track the voting records of Michigan's elected officials. Many candidates have done an about face and are now running from their voting records. *They can run ... but they cannot hide!*

Since June, CWA has been contacting its members door-to-door, by phone and through the mail to share its endorsements and to mobilize voters on November 5<sup>th</sup>. At the same time, CWA is campaigning to expose the anti-environmental candidates and to spotlight pro-environmental candidates through the news media.

As the old saying goes, sometimes the truth hurts, but we must continue spreading the word about the real "heroes" and "zeros" in the high stakes challenge to protect the environment ... now and for the future. We hope you'll consider CWA's endorsements on Election Day – November 5<sup>th</sup> – and that you'll do your part to elect an environmental majority in 2002.

## **CLEAN WATER ACTION'S 2002 ENDORSEMENTS**

### ***STATEWIDE RACES***

#### **Governor and Lieutenant Governor**

It is no secret that Governor Engler has been a foe to the environment since taking office nearly twelve years ago. During his tenure, Michigan has seen the roll back of numerous polluter pay laws, enactment of corporate secrecy legislation, and the division of the state department charged with protecting and maintaining our natural resources.

We are proud to join with others in the environmental community to support **Jennifer Granholm for Governor**. CWA is confident that Granholm will end an era of anti-environmentalism in Lansing and restore the State as a national leader in protecting our air, land and water. Granholm's environmental plan is extensive and touches on many of the major challenges facing Michigan's environment. Granholm's choice for a Lieutenant Governor, State Senator John Cherry, bolsters the case for the Granholm ticket. Cherry's voting record is close to **100%** pro-environment, which contrasts dramatically with that of opponent Dick Posthumus' **7%** voting record and the **0%** voting record of his running mate, State Senator Loren Bennett.

#### **Attorney General**

Although CWA does not generally endorse candidates for **Attorney General, Gary Peters** is an exceptional choice we could not pass up. Peters' achievements and commitment to the environment in the Michigan Senate include leading the charge in calling for a permanent ban on directional drilling beneath the Great Lakes and working to end the Engler-Posthumus policy of allowing polluters to keep secret illegal discharges discovered in internal audits.

# Clean Water Action's 2002 Endorsements

Note: If you do not know the number of the Michigan House and/or Senate district in which you live, you can find this information on your voter registration card or go to <[www.vote-smart.org/index.phtml](http://www.vote-smart.org/index.phtml)>.

*\*Indicates pro-environment voting records in the House or the Senate.*

## MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# 17	Daniel Paletko
# 18	Glenn Anderson
# 20	John Stewart
# 21	Mark Slavens
# 23	Kathleen Law
# 24	Frank Benson
# 25	Steve Bieda
# 26	Dave Woodward*
# 27	Andy Meisner
# 31	Paul Gieleghem*
# 37	Aldo Vagnozzi
# 42	Frank Activatti, Jr.
# 43	Betty Fortino
# 45	John Garfield
# 49	Jack Minore*
# 52	Pam Byrnes
# 53	Chris Kolb*
# 54	Ruth Ann Jamnick*
# 55	Gail Hauser-Hurley
# 57	Doug Spade*
# 60	Alexander Lipsey*
# 62	Ted Dearing
# 65	Sharon Renier
# 67	Dianne Byrum*
# 68	Michael Murphy*
# 69	Gretchen Whitmer*
# 73	Fred Clowney
# 75	Peter Vander Meulen
# 76	Michael Sak
# 91	Nancy Fry
# 92	Julie Dennis*
# 94	Tim Braun
# 101	Nick Krieger
# 108	Laurie Stupak

## MICHIGAN SENATE

# 2	Martha Scott*
# 5	Leeland Burton*
# 6	Eileen DeHart*
# 7	George Mans*
# 8	Raymond Basham*
# 9	Dennis Olshove*
# 13	Colleen Levitt
# 14	Gilda Jacobs*
# 18	Liz Brater*
# 19	Mark Schauer*
# 20	Ed LaForge*
# 23	Virg Bernero*
# 26	Deb Cherry*
# 27	Bob Emerson*
# 29	Steve Pestka*
# 32	Mike Hanley*
# 34	Bob Shrauger
# 36	Andy Nuemann*
# 37	Michael Estes

### ***Where is CWA's Environmental Scorecard?***

*CWA typically releases an environmental scorecard rating members of the Michigan House and Senate, but state lawmakers delayed votes on key measures until late this summer. Because election laws prevent us from releasing scorecards after we have begun our endorsement process (May 2002), we were unable to compile a scorecard this election cycle. If you'd like to be part of a growing network of citizen lobbyists – at home or in Lansing – who are forcing action in Lansing on environmental measures, please contact Bethany Renfer in our Lansing office (517.203.0754).*

## The Clean Water Act Turns Thirty... *And Is Still Under Attack.*

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the federal Clean Water Act, (*and Clean Water Action too!*). The Act, which has been dubbed by many as the nation's most effective environmental law, co-authored by Clean Water Action's founder and current president, David Zwick. Yet on the eve of this landmark anniversary, the Bush Administration is in the process of dismantling the Act. Almost every aspect of the law is being weakened by the Bush Administration, from prohibitions on dumping industrial waste and raw sewage into waters to saving critical wetlands. Most recently, the Bush Administration announced that it plans to rewrite the rules to limit the number of waters that are protected by the Clean Water Act entirely. ***This is the most serious assault on clean water since its enactment.***

In the early 1970s, pollution plagued most waterways: Lake Erie was considered biologically dead, major rivers like the Hudson and the Mississippi were open sewers, Ohio's Cuyahoga River actually caught on fire because of pollution, and only 30 to 40 percent of America's lakes, rivers, and coastal waters were safe for fishing and swimming.

In 1972, an outraged public demanded that Congress take action. With passage of the federal Clean Water Act, elimination of all water pollution by 1985 became a national goal.

While the country has yet to fulfill that promise, we have reaped the benefits of the Act in numerous ways. According to the U.S. EPA, approximately 60 percent of our nation's lakes, rivers, and coastal areas are now safe for swimming and fishing, wetlands losses have slowed to one-quarter of the rate of destruction that existed 30 years ago, and sewage treatment plants treat the waste of 72 percent of our population.

But this September, US EPA released its biannual report of U.S. water quality conditions, and the news is still not what it should be. The report shows U.S. waterways are now becoming more polluted. From 1998 to 2000, the percentage of polluted rivers rose from 35 percent to 39 percent, the percentage of polluted estuaries jumped from 44 percent to 51 percent, and the percentage of polluted shorelines increased from 12 percent to 14 percent.

As we mark the Clean Water Act's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, most Americans are still waiting for the Act's promises to be kept to end discharges and make all waters safe. Industrial polluters continue to dump too many contaminants in our waters. Polluted runoff from farm fields and city streets is virtually uncontrolled. Wetlands continue to be destroyed at an alarming rate. Thousands of lakes, streams, and miles of rivers fail to meet the most basic water quality standards.

Three decades after the passage of the Clean Water Act, we must ask: *why* are the law's goals still unmet? In large part, corporate special interests have lobbied hard to stop implementation and enforcement of key provisions of the law. On this important anniversary, we must challenge our elected officials to keep the promise of the Clean Water Act – that everyone everywhere deserves clean and safe water. We must tell the Bush administration to stop weakening the Act, and tell our members of Congress that, if the administration continues to try, they must stop it.

Despite some important successes, we are far from achieving the Clean Water Act's goals. Unfortunately, opposition from corporate special interests and hostility by the Bush administration has threatened our progress. As the Act turns 30 this year, we must recommit ourselves to the goal of clean and safe water for everyone.

### **A FEW FACTS ABOUT MICHIGAN'S WATER QUALITY**

- Every inland lake and river has an advisory warning about consuming the fish due to high levels of mercury and other contaminants.
- Roughly 50 billion gallons of raw or partially treated sewage overflow into Michigan waters annually as the result of failing and outdated sewer systems.
- It is still legal, and in many cases free, for polluters to discharge into Michigan waterways. In fact, Michigan taxpayers are picking up an annual bill of around \$10 million to oversee the permitting program.
- In 2001, there were over 100 Great Lakes beach closings and advisories due to unsafe water quality conditions.
- Of Michigan's estimated original 11,200,000 acres of wetlands, circa 1780, only 5,583,400 acres are estimated to still exist as of the 1980s, a net loss of 50%.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>,  
vote **YES** on Proposal 2,  
the "Clean Water Bond" ...  
we just can't afford to wait any longer!



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