



# Conservation Coalition

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

The Honorable Governor Jennifer Granholm  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Granholm,

The undersigned members of the Michigan sporting and conservation community would like to thank you for your leadership and initiative to combine the Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality. Effective, transparent, science-based natural resource management is paramount to the collective conservation and recreational opportunities our organizations support for the benefit of future generations.

In our meeting with Lt. Governor Cherry on September 22, 2009, we expressed our support for further integrating the efforts of Michigan's resource managing agencies. We see this as an excellent opportunity to improve the management practices the departments currently employ, but also to re-energize a new, service-based department that works with the bi-partisan Natural Resources Commission to establish science-based management policies. While we appreciate your willingness to work with the Conservation Coalition in developing a strategy for the re-combination of the DNR and DEQ, we are deeply disappointed and concerned about the provision in subsection (II)(2) of Executive Order 45 of 2009, which removes the authority of the Natural Resources Commission to appoint the Department Director, and instead, allocates this appointment authority to the Governor. This is a significant shift away from the collective goals of hunters, anglers, and conservationists to remove politics from natural resource management. This power shift also severely undermines the fundamental principles Michigan citizens overwhelmingly supported under Proposal G of 1996.

The Conservation Coalition is a collection of many diverse interests that enjoy and support hunting, fishing, trapping, and the conservation of Michigan's natural resources. Many of the undersigned members hold additional convictions with respect to other provisions of Executive Order 45 (i.e., abolishment of the Citizen's Committee for Michigan State Parks, Water Resources Conservation Advisory Council and gubernatorial appointment of the Department of Agriculture Director). However, we all firmly concur that transferring the NRC's appointment authority to a politically-accountable executive will (1) Reduce Transparency, (2) Promote a top-level administration that limits public input, and (3) Place politics above science-based resource management and the goals of Proposal G.

## **We believe that Executive Order 45 of 2009:**

- **Reduces Transparency.** Shifting the appointment of the Director from the bi-partisan, citizen-represented NRC reduces the transparency, openness and accessibility of the Department. Under E.O. 45, the hiring of the Department Director will now occur within the Executive Department and Department policies and procedures will no longer need to move through the NRC. Additionally, the budget of the Department may also become less transparent as the accountability is left exclusively to the Governor instead of a citizen-based commission. Some members of the Coalition argue we must go one step further to increase transparency by creating an oversight committee on the DNR's

finances. Combining the DNR and DEQ should be an opportunity to create a more transparent, open, and accessible Department, not the other way around.

- **Removes citizen oversight.** The new structure of the DNRE under E.O. 45 would be similar to the structure of the current DEQ, a structure that limits public input on the Department's policies and procedures. While select organizations and lobbyists might have an opportunity to access the administration to provide input on department policies and procedures, the general public is left out. This structure limits regular public access to key decision-makers and may weaken the responsiveness of the Department to citizens' concerns. Citizen input should be promoted, not limited to a case-by-case basis "as required by law."
- **Places politics above science-based resource management and the goals of Proposal G.** The Conservation Coalition believes in reducing the level of political decisions oversight in the management of Michigan's natural resources as much as possible. In 1996, nearly 70 percent of Michigan citizens supported this concept in favor of science-based management practices. Michigan citizens do not want natural resources management to be dictated by politics and the popular vote. Shifting the gubernatorial appointment of the Department Director from the NRC to the Governor removes citizen oversight from the process, making the NRC and the Department's administration accountable to a political figure only. This injects more partisan politics into natural resources management by removing the buffer of the bipartisan NRC. Vesting a politically-motivated public official with complete authority over the new DNRE is the exact opposite direction we should be taking to create a service-based Department.
  - *Environmental Science Review Board* – E.O. 45 also creates an Environmental Science Review Board, which the Coalition supports as a tool to help bolster science-based management of Michigan's natural resources. However, E.O. 45 provides that this Board will be appointed by the Director, who would be held accountable only to the Governor. The concept of this Board is to equip the NRC and Director with unbiased scientific information for the purposes of making important management decisions (i.e., CWD). When a politically-appointed Director appoints the Board, its credibility as an unbiased consultant to the DNRE is severely undermined.

For the aforementioned reasons, the undersigned members of the Conservation Coalition respectfully ask you to rescind E.O. 45 of 2009 and reissue an E.O. to allow the Natural Resources Commission to continue to appoint the Director of the newly formed Department of Natural Resources and Environment, for the purpose of increasing transparency and reducing politics in Michigan's natural resources management. Once again, we thank you for the opportunity to work with you and Lt. Governor Cherry on this critical process. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

#### Statewide Organizations

Bowfishing Association of Michigan – Archie Martell, President  
Great Lakes Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers – James Schramm, President  
Michigan Airboating Conservation Association – Ron Miller, President  
Michigan Association of Gamebird Breeders and Hunting Preserves – Jim Trinklein, President  
Michigan B.A.S.S. Federation Nation – Paul Sacks, President  
Michigan Bear Hunters Association – Phil Hewitt, Vice President  
Michigan Bow Hunters Association – Bruce Levey, President  
Michigan Charter Boat Association – Captain Denny Grinold, State Affairs Officer  
Michigan Conservation Foundation – Bob Jacobsen, President  
Michigan Duck Hunters Association – Drew Deters, President  
Michigan Hunting Dog Federation – Matt Wood, President  
Michigan Outdoors Women's Club – Fran Yeager, President  
Michigan Pheasants Forever – Mike Parker, Regional Biologist

Michigan Recreation and Park Association – Dennis Schornack, Executive Director  
Michigan Resource Stewards – Dave Borgeson  
Michigan River Guides Association – John Ray, President  
Michigan State United Coon Hunters Association – Jim Wale, President  
Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen’s Association – Rick Balabon, President  
Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers Association – John Caretti, President  
Michigan Trout Unlimited – Dr. Bryan Burroughs, Executive Director  
Michigan United Conservation Clubs – Erin McDonough, Executive Director  
Michigan Wild Turkey Hunters Association – Jim Maturen, President  
National Wildlife Federation - Andy Buchsbaum, Great Lakes Regional Executive Director  
Upper Peninsula Sportsmen’s Alliance – Dale McNamee, President

Former Department Directors and Natural Resource Commission Members

Howard A. Tanner, Phd – Former Director, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (1975-1983)

Regional and Local Organizations

Bridgeport Gun Club – Jack Danks, President  
Chesaning Area Conservation Club – Brad Alcorn, President  
Cadillac Sportsman's Club – Bruce Finnerty, President  
Cass County Conservation Club – Chuck Chandler, President  
Cedar Rod & Gun Club – Tim Stein, President  
Chick-Owa Sportsmen Club – Tom Medendorp, President  
Dowagiac Conservation Club – Lee Maager, President  
Flint River Chapter, National Wild Turkey Federation – James M. Miller, President  
Frankenmuth Conservation Club – Karl Weiss, President  
Friends of Blueberry Ridge – Paul Hannuksela, President  
Friends of the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge – Charles Hoover, President  
Friends of Pontiac Lake – Ron Groeneveld, President  
German-American Marksmanship Club – Paul Werner, President  
Gun River Skeet and Trap, Inc. – David McMurray, President  
Holland Fish and Game Club – Drew Deters, President  
Kent County Conservation League – Vic Scudder, President  
Ludington Area Charterboat Association – Jim Fenner, President  
Michigan Anglers Association – Chris Matteson, President  
Michigan Fly Fishing Club – Joe Sattler, MUCC District 1 Director and club representative  
Montmorency County Conservation Club – Carol Rose, President  
North Macomb Sportsmen's Club – Don Brown, club rep. and Macomb County Commissioner  
Oakland County Sportfishing Association – Jeff Loehr, President  
Oakland County Sportsmen’s Club – Joseph W. Oberlee, President  
Ottawa Sportsmen’s Club – John Stenvig, President  
Pine River Sportsman's Club – Dick Herrmann, club representative  
Ravenna Conservation Club – Joe James, President  
Richmond Sportsmen's Club – Jim Kuntz, Secretary  
Saginaw Field and Stream Club – Tom Heritier, President  
Saugatuck Area Charter Boat Association – Ron Westrate, President  
St. Joseph County Conservation & Sportsman Club, Inc. – Allen Kasdorf, Vice President  
Tri-County Sportsmen's League – Robert Bolog, President  
Tulip City Rod and Gun Club, Inc. – Phil Wilcox, Director  
West Michigan Walleye Club – Jim Brandt, President  
Western Wayne County Conservation Association – Robert Haviland, President  
White Lake Area Sportfishing Association – Carl Churchill, President

MUCC District 8 Clubs – Bill Furtaw, Chair

- B & BS Gun Club
- Detroit Area Steelheaders, Inc.
- Four Square Conservation & Sportsmen's Association
- Friends of WC Wetzel State Park
- Gilbert's Sportsmen Club
- Harsens Island Conservation Club
- Huron Pointe Sportsmen's Association
- Lake St Clair Walleye Association
- Michigan Ontario Muskie Club
- Mid Thumb Bowmen Club
- Perch Point Conservation Club
- Selfridge Rod & Gun Club
- Southeastern Michigan Conservation
- St Clair - Pheasants Forever
- St Clair Hunt & Fish Club
- St Clair Shores Sportsmen's Association

MUCC District 1 Clubs – Nancy Dittmar, Chair

- Downriver Walleye Federation
- Flat Rock Sportsman Association
- Four Seasons Fishing Club
- Friends of the Detroit River
- Garden City High School Sports Club
- Huron River Fishing Association
- Huron Valley Conservation Association
- Lincoln Bowmen Archery Club
- Metro West Chapter – MSSFA
- Paul Bunyan Club
- Wayne County Raccoon Hunters Association
- Wolverine Sports and Conservation Club

cc:

Lt. Governor John Cherry  
Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop  
Speaker of the House Andy Dillon  
Members of the Michigan Legislature  
Members of the Natural Resources Commission  
Rebecca Humphries, Director, Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Steve Chester, Director, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Don Koivisto, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture  
MUCC Board of Directors  
Members of the Michigan Conservation Coalition  
Wayne Wood, President, Michigan Farm Bureau  
Jim Byrum, President, Michigan Agri-Business Association  
Rich Studley, President and CEO, Michigan Chamber of Commerce  
Tim Hughes, Legislative Director, Executive Office of the Governor  
Donna Stine, Policy Advisor, Executive Office of the Governor