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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

KENNETH B. HORN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Committees:
Energy and Technology
Republican Vice Chair
Oversight and Investigations
Tourism, Outdoor Recreation and
Natural Resources

To: Dr. Thomas Armitage
From: Representative Ken Horn, 94th District, Michigan
Date: November 3, 2010
RE: Written copy of oral testimony offered October 27, 2010

Dr. Armitage:

Following you will find a written copy of the testimony I provided during the conference call on October 27. I thought it might be useful. Thank you.

Representative Ken Horn

**Testimony before the EPA Science Advisory Board Dioxin Review Panel
Public Meeting, October 27, 2010**

In listening to the previous testimony; I kind of feel as if I'm the half-time show in some Scientific Super Bowl of Debate over the effects of Dioxin. I sincerely hope to put a very human face on the regulatory implications of the outcome of the SAB's technical and scientific deliberation.

A significant portion of the Tittabawassee River flows through Saginaw County, Michigan and the 94th House District, which I currently serve.

Before taking this office, in my role as a Saginaw County Commissioner, I witnessed the closing of our county parks; and Health Department warnings to halt recreational activities near the river.

Dioxin, unfortunately, became a household word in this region.

I truly appreciate the role of the EPA and our own Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE).

We will continue to work together to make public health and a clean environment a top priority for the State of Michigan.

While we are a grateful and patient community, we are also a practical population of people; and we've been dealing with the promises of clean up for a very long time.

Make no mistake that health and safety are the top priority; and that the citizens of the region have been calling for sound science to help guide us through this process.

Just to give you a flavor of what we've experienced; layers of government and conflicting standards have caused us no end of grief.

At 90 parts per trillion, Michigan, through its MDNRE maintains one of the strictest standards for dioxin clean up in the nation. They'll find a hot spot in one area, and not be able to find it two days later.

The EPA currently offers a site specific standard, which seems to make more sense to us.

From a personal perspective; Saginaw County residents were anxious to hear the results of the University of Michigan report on Human Exposure, led by Dr. David Garabrant.

We also waited for a Michigan State University study on Animal Wildlife Exposure.

We are confident that the science behind these studies is sound and that human and animal health is at little risk while the cleanup work progresses.

We are willing to wait for good science, but are frustrated at each turn; as some new regulatory policy or inter-departmental challenge arises to put off cleanup, once again.

We residents of the area are simply looking for a little common sense.

We celebrated as the EPA re-established authority over the Tittabawasee River cleanup; but, frankly, were shocked as hundreds of trees including many ancient oaks were destroyed in one of the areas of concern.

Certainly, the process of clean up cannot include that kind of brute force the entire length of the river, and into Saginaw Bay.

We find it difficult to justify the destruction of nature in the name of protecting nature.

To get more to my point, my greatest concern is that the uncertainty caused by new remediation standards may cause cleanups that are currently underway; to halt, change dramatically and be delayed unnecessarily, once again.

To that end, while the EPA describes new standards as “preliminary” and “interim,” their practical effect has real consequences.

Given the potential adverse impact on the people of my district, it is important to proceed with great caution on this critical matter.

On behalf of the 210,000 people of Saginaw County, I ask that you ensure that the Dioxin Preliminary Remediation Goals selected by EPA are fully reviewed by the scientific community; and hold off new standards until EPA has completed the reassessment.

We live here; we want our lives and our property back. And while we're restless for a reasonable resolution; we continue to advocate for a solution based in sound science.

We believe strongly that delaying the cleanup unnecessarily... will hinder the economic advancement that we are working so hard to cultivate in Saginaw County.

Our request is clear; please do not arbitrarily or capriciously change the rules one more time without some strong evidence to indicate that a change is absolutely required.

Do not let perfection be the enemy of the great progress that has been made in this particular cleanup effort.

I certainly appreciate the attention you've given to preserve the health of the people in my district and for the protection of our precious natural resources.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my community's concern with you.