



March 1, 2007

Dear Policymaker:

At Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy, we work to educate policymakers and the public on the importance of protecting Michigan's world class natural resources.

It was refreshing and encouraging to read the Emergency Financial Advisory Panel's report which suggested the state must reinvest in assets which define our quality of life, including natural resources. While every sector of government has suffered from under-funding in recent years, we believe that no sectors have taken a greater hit than those charged with protecting our natural resources and environment.

A recent survey conducted by Heart of the Lakes shows that citizen support for funding the preservation of our public lands and waters is extremely strong and that the public is uninformed regarding the erosion of this funding. For your review, we have provided the aggregate results of this survey along with some commentary on information from the cross tabulations.

Environmental protection, conservation and recreation programs are not amenities. They are essential to Michigan's long-term prosperity. Failure to invest in them jeopardizes our greatest competitive advantage – our quality of life.

We know these are historically tough times and we congratulate you for your courage and determination to advance, not retreat, in the face of these challenges. We urge you to put the quality back into Michigan's outstanding natural resources and as you reform tax policy, assure adequate revenues to support the critical work performed by the Michigan Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality, and by other conservation programs at the state and local level.

If you wish to discuss the results of this survey or our work, please do not hesitate to contact me. Heart of the Lakes stands ready to assist you in the task of establishing a long-term funding solution for conservation and environmental protection in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Rachel Kuntzsch
Executive Director

Enclosures