



October 17, 2023

RE: Wetland Restoration Budget Support

Director Bowen,

We the undersigned organizations, representing environmental and conservation communities, local governments, and industry welcome you to the Director position at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). We are confident that under your leadership, the Michigan DNR will continue to improve natural resource management and stewardship throughout the state to the benefit of all Michiganders.

Of Michigan’s tremendous natural resource base and wide array of management responsibilities that the DNR balances, wetlands play a special and unique role to both wildlife and human communities based on the broad spectrum of ecological goods and services they can provide. Given the value that wetlands bring to the landscape and the unfortunate widespread wetland losses that have occurred, we respectfully request that you make wetland investments a top priority. With the strong support of DNR leadership, we successfully advocated for and secured nearly \$13 million of new wetland conservation investment via the legislative appropriations process during the first half of 2023. This historical investment will unlock millions more of private and federal investments to conduct wetland conservation work at an unprecedented scale here in Michigan and we are extremely excited to be working with your staff to deliver these dollars on the ground for people and wildlife.

It is well documented that functioning wetlands are some of the most important ecosystems in the World for supporting diverse fish and wildlife species as well for providing essential services to people. These ecosystem services, which include flood mitigation, nutrient and sediment filtration, carbon storage and fish and wildlife habitat, support a robust outdoor recreation economy valued at over \$11 billion per year and make our communities safer and more resilient. The power of restored wetlands to absorb flood water was displayed at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge in 2020 when managers were able to open water control structures to absorb flood water associated with the Edenville Dam failure. Enough water was able to be diverted to fill all 10,000 acres of refuge under 10 feet of water. Had these restored wetlands not been there, downstream communities would have been hit even harder with flooding and the damages even more catastrophic.



Given the significance of our wetland resources as cost-effective forms of natural infrastructure, we feel it is time to double-down on wetland investments. **We ask that you join us in advocating for robust wetland restoration funding in the FY25 Executive Budget and help make the Great Lakes State a national leader for state wetland conservation investments.**

Sincerely,

- Ducks Unlimited
- National Wildlife Federation
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Michigan Environmental Council
- Audubon Great Lakes
- Michigan United Conservation Clubs
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
- Safari Club International
- Michigan Aggregates Association
- Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society
- Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever
- Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers Association
- Six Rivers Land Conservancy
- Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
- National Wild Turkey Federation