



Clean Water Action Calls on Legislature to Ban New Landfills, Act against Trash

*Ban on new landfills can reduce mountains of trash flooding into
Michigan from Canada, other states*

LANSING – Clean Water Action today called on the Legislature to act on tough anti-trash measures that will give Michigan communities immediate relief from ever-increasing amounts of Canadian and out-of-state garbage.

“Our legislators must act now and ban new landfills before they depart Lansing and leave Michigan residents buried under other people’s garbage,” said Cyndi Roper of Clean Water Action. “Canadian and out-of-state trash threatens our land, our water and our quality of life, and banning new landfills is a quick and effective way to reduce the surge of imported garbage. It appears the only reason the Legislature refuses to take this important step is because it wants to protect the trash industry, and their protection of the status quo is completely unacceptable.”

Clean Water Action applauded Michigan House Democrats for introducing tough anti-trash measures in the Legislature that attack the economics of the trash trade. The House Democratic plan, introduced in 2005, attacks the root causes that have made Michigan a trash magnet: too much landfill capacity and the cheapest dumping charges around. The plan includes raising the dumping charge from 21 cents a ton – the region’s lowest – to \$7.50 a ton, and banning new landfills until 2011.

Last year, Republican inaction allowed a ban on landfill expansions to expire on Jan. 1, 2006. Since then, at least seven landfill operations will expand or have applied to grow. Michigan’s landfills have, on average, an estimated 17 years of remaining capacity.

“More landfills mean more trash,” Roper said. “By allowing the ban to expire, this Legislature has only worsened our problem with Canadian and out-of-state trash.”

Roper said Clean Water Action has collected more than 10,000 letters from citizens voicing concern about Michigan’s growing problem of imported trash. The letters call on the Legislature to increase the dumping charges and to ban new or expanded landfills until 2011 Roper said. In April, Clean Water Action launched a pledge drive urging House members to sign a pledge stating their support for the landfill ban. Despite repeated calls to House Republican offices, only one Republican signed the pledge.

“Michigan citizens have said again and again that they want less trash and tough action from the Legislature against the garbage lobby,” Roper said. “Unfortunately, this Legislature has given us delay upon delay. We are now told the House environment committee chair is refusing to hold hearings on the trash bills! We are frustrated that the Legislature has chosen to stand up to protect the status quo and the trash industry, instead of standing up to protect our land, water and way of life.”

Michigan took in 6.2 million tons of Canadian and out-of-state trash in 2005, a 100,000-ton increase from 2004, according to the Department of Environmental Quality.