

A Sustainable Watershed Funding Strategy for Michigan

Results of Statewide Water Resource Leader Engagement

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Background and Purpose

Water resources are inseparable from Michigan's identity. They are an essential element of the economy, the health of communities, and Michigan's way of life. Despite the significance of water resources to the state, current funding models that support watershed management are insufficient. Groups that work to restore, protect, and enhance watersheds consistently lack funding and are left competing for limited state and federal dollars while important work goes uncompleted. To address this funding gap, in 2014, partners in West Michigan began working to develop a sustainable funding mechanism to support watershed management. While organizations in West Michigan have led the effort to address this issue, Michigan faces these challenges statewide.

Since 2014, a series of studies has been prepared and significant stakeholder engagement has occurred within the West Michigan region. This effort began with the formation of the West Michigan Watershed Collaborative, which has engaged over 50 organizations active in watershed management in the 13-county region (see Appendix B). Their efforts identified watershed management funding needs in West Michigan; evaluated alternative funding approaches; and, through dozens of meetings, developed consensus among partners within the region on a new framework for sustainable funding. In 2019, a telephone survey was conducted to assess Michiganders' receptiveness to the proposed approach. Reports detailing these efforts are provided in the reference section of this document.

In 2020, partners in West Michigan began to engage water resource and community leaders from other regions of the state to share information about the emerging funding proposal and gain understanding of these leaders' questions or concerns to refine the funding model. The results of these discussions are summarized in this report.

Funding Framework: Voluntary Watershed Contributions

In the current political environment, the consensus-building process determined that it would be undesirable, and likely unsuccessful, to pursue additional watershed funding through tax increases. This philosophy drove the decision to advance a novel approach that would create a mechanism for residents to make a voluntary contribution to watershed management through property tax bills. Funding would be collected by counties and administered through regional planning bodies to leverage existing administrative structures and better enable work to be conducted on a watershed basis, as watersheds do not adhere to political boundaries.

This framework would require new, statewide enabling legislation that provides counties the authority to opt in to the initiative and guidelines for its operations. To be successful, it needs to provide enough flexibility that it can be tailored to meet the needs of the entire state yet also provide enough consistency to ensure successful implementation. A central component of the funding framework is that it operates on a regional scale. This philosophy recognizes that Michigan's regions vary significantly in terms of watershed conditions, land-use features, population, economic well-being, organizational structure and capacity, community priorities, and many other factors. Rather than dictating a one-size-fits-all approach for all of Michigan's regions, the framework retains decision making at the regional level for many critical elements of the program design so that the funding and implementation approach can be tailored to the unique conditions of Michigan's regions. To administer the funding, one or more watershed advisory

groups would be formed on a regional basis to guide funding decisions that reflect regional watershed priorities. Existing watershed groups could also serve in this role.

Core elements of the funding approach identified through previous phases of the initiative are identified in Appendix C. Additional details and the rationale for elements of the structure are provided in the West Michigan Sustainable Watershed Funding Strategy report published in 2017.

Regional Engagement

A central component of the funding framework recognizes the differences among Michigan's regions and structures the funding model to account for these differences by retaining decision making at the regional level. As the funding framework emerged from West Michigan, project partners recognized that they did not have a full view of all circumstances in other regions and thus water resource leaders throughout the state would need to be engaged to ensure that the framework was responsive to conditions of other regions. To achieve this goal, the project team hosted a series of seven regional roundtable discussions with water resource leaders throughout Michigan. In many regions, the project team sought support from community leaders to identify and convene a small group of people to represent the perspectives of the respective region. Through this process, 50 people representing watershed-focused nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, local government, regional planning organizations, businesses, conservation districts, friends groups, and academic institutions discussed the proposed funding framework and provided feedback regarding concerns and priorities from their region. The individuals who participated in these sessions are listed in Appendix A. These meetings were intended to begin statewide stakeholder engagement, starting with water resource leaders, and recognize that further engagement with many others will be essential.

Results

There was consensus among the participants that there is a need for increased funding to support watershed management in Michigan. Overall, participants from across the state were supportive of the effort to address this funding need, and most offered to remain engaged as the funding framework is refined and advanced. Participants identified areas they saw as strengths of the initiative, posed questions about the framework, and identified areas where additional consideration is appropriate. The following sections highlight significant topics of conversation among the meetings. Additional points of discussion are provided in Appendix D.

Strengths of the Initiative

The following strengths of the funding framework were identified throughout the meetings.

- **A regional approach is appropriate.** There was consensus that a funding model that functions on a regional level is more desirable and will be more effective than alternative models that function on a statewide basis and route funding and decision making through state government. Participants were confident that more money would be raised, with lower administrative burden, and funding decisions would better reflect local priorities under a regional framework.

- **A voluntary approach is appropriate.** Participants agreed that, amid the current political environment, designing a voluntary funding model was appropriate and would position the initiative for success.
- **Operational funding is a priority.** Many participants identified base funding as a primary need for their organizations to be successful. Participants were supportive of the structure of the funding framework that would enable regions to determine how to allocate funding to operational expenses, plan development, as well as on-the-ground work.
- **There is greater potential to leverage local funding.** Many participants noted that the funding framework could be used strategically to provide matching dollars for state and federal grant opportunities, which increases the potential for Michigan to secure additional funding from federal sources.
- **This approach is administratively efficient.** Many participants noted that the proposed method to contribute and collect voluntary contributions through the existing property tax billing structure would make efficient use of existing administrative mechanisms, especially compared to establishing a new structure.

Topics for Additional Consideration

Over the course of the regional roundtable discussions, common themes emerged regarding areas that participants believed may require additional consideration. In some instances, differing perspective among regions emerged through the discussions. The following is a summary of areas that may require additional consideration and consensus building as the funding framework advances.

- **Statewide and regional elements.** Participants often posed questions about which elements of the funding framework would be applicable on a statewide basis as part of the enabling legislation and which elements would be retained at the regional level. Through these conversations, it was suggested that program elements be delineated between a statewide legislative framework and regional decisions to enhance understanding of the program structure. Furthermore, the regional boundaries through which the program would operate should be identified.
- **Governance model.** Under the proposed funding model, regions would be able to establish one or more watershed advisory groups that would guide funding allocations. Under the proposed framework, regions would have the ability to determine the composition of these groups and their decision-making structures. The intent of this framing was to respect regional decision making and recognize the differences among Michigan's regions. Participants, however, suggested that guidelines should be established to ensure successful implementation of the model and assist regions in establishing the program.
- **Eligible funding activities.** The proposed framework has focused on funding related to the development and implementation of state-approved watershed management plans (section 319 of the Clean Water Act). The intent of this focus has been to utilize established and well-defined planning processes that identify watershed conditions, sources and causes of pollution, and methods to address priority management actions. Many participants suggested that this planning process would help ensure funds are allocated for the intended purposes, providing greater accountability of funding allocations.

In contrast, some participants suggested that funding should not be limited solely to projects identified through state-approved watershed management plans because some local watershed groups do not have the capacity or desire to develop those plans. Additionally, these groups felt that directing funding to developing state-approved watershed management plans would use too significant of a portion of funding that could reasonably be expected to be raised within their region. Furthermore, these groups felt that the development and implementation of watershed management plans can sometimes be too slow moving and therefore not responsive enough to emerging issues in their communities. To address this concern there was preliminary discussion about broadening the list of eligible plans that could be used to guide allocations to include Lakewide Action and Management Plans, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Management Plans, and similar water resource management plans that would need to be delineated.

This view contrasts somewhat with a concern brought up by some participants that funding raised through the initiative could supplant rather than supplement traditional sources of funding, especially in jurisdictions where municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) compliance is required to improve water quality. In these regions, there was interest in developing a narrower definition of eligible funding activities. All participants agreed that the funding should not supplant MS4 compliance.

- **Eligible recipients of funding.** Participants suggested that additional consideration should be given to identify in greater detail which organizations or entities would be eligible recipients of the funding. Generally, the initiative has suggested that individual regions are best positioned to make these decisions, recognizing the difference among regions and the capacity of entities in these areas. For example, there was discussion that Michigan’s conservation districts are well suited to carry out watershed management activities and should be eligible for funding. However, others expressed unease about governmental entities, especially municipalities, receiving funding due to concerns about supplanting existing sources of funding for stormwater compliance.
- **Transparency and accountability.** In almost all of the meetings, participants discussed the need for transparency and accountability of funding allocations. There was general understanding that recipients would be expected to report their activities and that regional planning organizations would report to the community how funds are allocated. These specific requirements and structure, however, need to be further defined.
- **Taxable status of contributions.** Multiple participants posed the question of whether contributions made by property owners would be tax deductible. This is an element that the project team has not discussed at length and should be considered.
- **Competition for donors.** Some participants expressed concern that, if implemented, the funding model could threaten their existing fundraising efforts. Furthermore, if nonprofit funding relied on the proposed funding framework rather than direct donor contributions, there would be additional restrictions on the use of funds that would narrow their scope of activities. Other participants suggested that the number of people who contribute directly to their organizations is relatively small compared to the number of property owners within their service regions and the funding mechanism would likely increase the funding available. To evaluate the concern, a comparison could be conducted that would assess the number of donors and amounts of donations the organization receives relative

to projected participation rates through the funding framework. Furthermore, feedback from donors to nonprofit organizations could be obtained directly to evaluate whether they would be more or less likely to contribute through one or both funding models.

- **Administrative mechanisms.** Throughout most of the regional meetings, participants indicated there are constructive relationships and trust between regional planning organizations and local water resource leaders. In the majority of regional meetings, participants were supportive of regional planning organizations serving as a fiduciary and fiscal agent. However, in one region, local watershed leaders expressed concern with the approach and did not believe that the funding raised would be allocated as intended. Similarly, representatives of this region expressed concern that some counties may not pass through funding as intended. This concern should be explored, and the framework should be updated to ensure it is robust enough to be implemented as intended.

Recommendations

Considering the feedback generated through the regional roundtable meetings, the West Michigan project partners should consider the following recommendations as they advance the sustainable watershed funding initiative.

- **Grow the leadership table.** As the sustainable watershed funding initiative transitions from a West Michigan–focused initiative to a statewide initiative, project partners should grow the leadership table to include additional representatives from all of Michigan’s regions and include diverse organization types. This could include broadening the project steering committee or forming an advisory committee depending on the interest and availability of partners from other regions.
- **Revise funding framework.** With additional representation in place from across the state, project partners should review the feedback provided through the regional roundtable meetings and make appropriate revisions to the funding framework.
- **Continue stakeholder engagement.** Once revisions to the funding framework are completed, project partners should engage the next tier of stakeholders, which may include statewide natural resource organizations, and those that would be directly involved with the administration of the program, such as municipalities, counties, and regional planning organizations. A similar process should be used to seek their input and revise the funding framework to address potential concerns those organizations may have. Upon completion of this step, the project team should evaluate the political climate when seeking introduction of legislation.
- **Continue implementation activities.** The West Michigan Sustainable Watershed Funding Strategy report identified a series of next steps to continue to advance the sustainable watershed funding initiative. Project partners should continue to advance those actions.
- **Fundraise to support activities.** Project partners should seek funding to support continued stakeholder engagement and further development of the proposed funding policy.

Resources

- Macatawa Area Coordinating Council. n.d. *West Michigan Watershed Summary*. Holland: West Michigan Watershed Collaborative. Accessed November 14, 2020. https://www.lgrow.org/s/West_Michigan_Watershed_Summary_DRAFT_reduced.pdf
- Public Sector Consultants. October 19, 2016. *A New Approach to Fund Watershed Management: An Evaluation of Funding Mechanisms*. Lansing: Public Sector Consultants. https://wmsrdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/West-Michigan-Watersheds-Funding-Report_PSC_10_26_16.pdf
- . November 6, 2017. *West Michigan Sustainable Watershed Funding Strategy*. Lansing: Public Sector Consultants. http://www.the-macc.org/wp-content/uploads/WMWC_Watershed_Funding_Strategy.pdf
- . November 15, 2019. *A Sustainable Watershed Funding Strategy for Michigan: Public Opinion Poll*. Lansing: Public Sector Consultants. https://wmsrdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Watershed-Funding-Strategy_Public-Survey.pdf

Appendix A: Roundtable Discussion Participants

The project team hosted a series of seven regional roundtable discussions with water resource leaders throughout Michigan. In many regions, the project team sought support from community leaders to identify and convene a small group of people to represent the perspectives of the respective region. Through this process, 50 people representing watershed-focused nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, local government, regional planning organizations, businesses, conservation districts, friends groups, and academic institutions discussed the proposed funding framework and provided feedback regarding concerns and priorities from their region. A list of participants and their organizations follows.

Capital Region

- Nicole Baumer, Deputy Director, Tri-County Regional Planning
- Fred Cowles, President, Middle Grand River Organization of Watersheds
- Ruth Kline-Robach, Outreach Specialist, Michigan State University Institute of Water Research and Department of Community Sustainability
- Sue Spagnuolo, Executive Director, Eaton Conservation District
- Cliff Walls, Environmental Sustainability Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning

Northeast Lower Peninsula

- Mike Beaulac, Retired, Michigan Office of the Great Lakes
- Tom Buhr, Former Board Member, Anglers of the Au Sable
- Rich Castle, Community Affairs Manager, Consumers Energy
- Alex Code, Founder and Managing Director, Line 45
- Abigail Ertel, Community Program Lead, Huron Pines
- Patrick Heraghty, Executive Director, Community Foundation of Northeast Michigan
- Brad Jensen, Executive Director, Huron Pines
- Scott McLeanne, Mayor, Rogers City
- Samantha Nellis, Watershed Project Manager, Huron Pines
- Carol Rose, Chair, Upper Black River Council
- Brandon Schroeder, Senior Extension Educator, Northeast District and Education Co-leader, Sea Grant Extension
- Katie Wolf, Liaison—Education and Community Outreach, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Friends of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Northwest Lower Peninsula

- Amy Beyer, Executive Director, Conservation Resource Alliance
- Jennifer Buchanan, Watershed Protection Director, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
- Doug Craven, Natural Resource Director, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
- Christine Crissman, Executive Director, The Watershed Center of Grand Traverse Bay
- Tim Ervin, Treasurer, Manistee County Community Foundation
- Becky Ewing, Executive Director, Rotary Charities of Traverse City

- Laura Heintzleman, President and CEO, Manistee County Community Foundation
- Jennifer McKay, Policy Director, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
- Sarah U'Ren, Program Director, The Watershed Center of Grand Traverse Bay

Saginaw Bay Watershed Region

- Trevor Edmonds, Director of Land Protection, Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy
- Rebecca Fedewa, Executive Director, Flint River Watershed Coalition
- Jane Fitzpatrick, Program Manager, Eastern Michigan Council of Government
- Mike Kelly, Director, Great Lakes Office, The Conservation Fund, Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network
- Dave Lossing, Chair, Shiawassee River Trail Coalition
- Bill Wright, Vice Chair, Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed
- Greg Yankee, Executive Director, Little Forks Land Conservancy (follow-up call)

Southeast Michigan Region

- Tricia Blicharski, Director of Operations, Friends of the Detroit River
- Anne Brasie, Executive Director, Clinton River Watershed Council
- Melissa Damaschke, Program Officer, Fred A. & Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
- Rebecca Esselman, Executive Director, Huron River Watershed Council
- Marie McCormick, Executive Director, Friends of the Rouge

Southwest Michigan Region

- Erin Fuller, Watershed Coordinator, Van Buren Conservation District
- Carolyn Grace, Director, St. Joseph County Conservation District
- Kevin Haight, President, Two Rivers Coalition
- Marcy Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director/Senior Planner, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Matt Meeserman, President, Friends of the St. Joe River
- Cheryl Vosburg, Director, Kalamazoo River Watershed Council

Upper Peninsula Region

- Stephanie Cree, Water Resource Specialist, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
- Rochelle Dale, Program Administrator, Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve
- Geraldine Grant, Senior Planner, Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Conservancy
- Carl Lindquist, Executive Director, Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Conservancy
- Aubrey E. Maccoux-LeDuc, Biological Services Department, Bay Mills Indian Community
- Bette Premo, Chief Executive Officer, White Water Associates

Appendix B: West Michigan Watershed Collaborative

Since 2014, leaders in West Michigan have been working to develop a sustainable funding mechanism to support watershed management. These efforts have been led by:

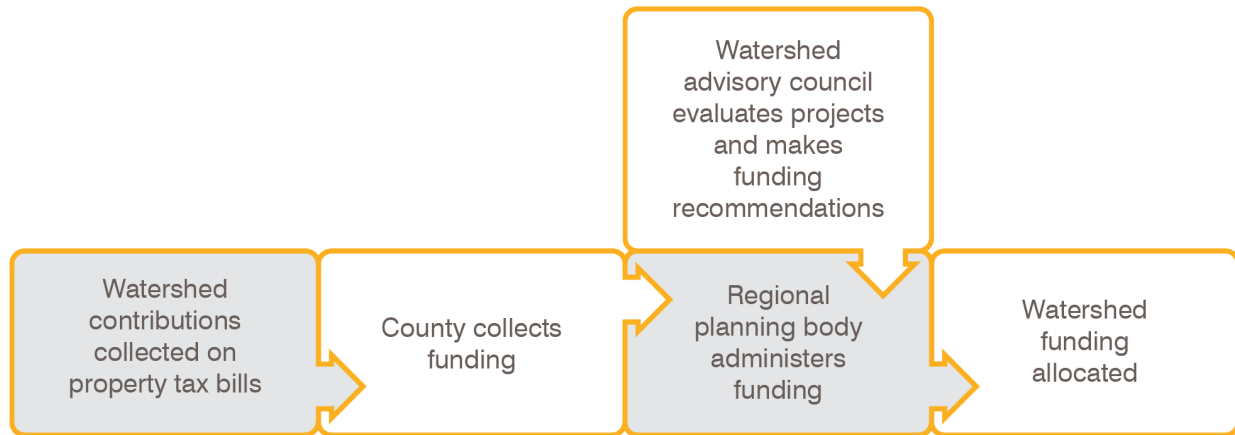
- Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, Holland, Michigan
- Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, Muskegon, Michigan

The following West Michigan organizations have put forth efforts by collaborating to identify watershed management funding needs, participating in meetings, and providing feedback to develop the proposed sustainable funding framework.

- Allegan Conservation District
- Alpine Township, Kent County
- Barry Conservation District
- Big Sable Watershed Council
- Calvin College
- Cannon Township
- City of Grand Rapids
- City of Kentwood
- City of Walker
- City of Wyoming
- Clinton Conservation District
- Clinton County Drain Commissioner
- Coldwater River Watershed Council
- Duck Creek Watershed Partners
- Flat River Watershed Council
- Four Townships Watershed Council
- Friends of Buck Creek
- Friends of Little Flower Creek
- Friends of the Maple River
- Grand Rapids Public Museum
- Grand Valley State University
- Ionia Conservation District
- Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
- Kent Conservation District
- Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
- Michigan League of Conservation Voters
- Michigan State University
- Middle Grand River Organization of Watersheds
- Mona Lake Watershed Council
- Muskegon Conservation District
- Muskegon County
- Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership
- Muskegon River Watershed Assembly
- Ottawa Conservation District
- Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner
- Pere Marquette Watershed Council
- Plaster Creek Stewards
- Rogue River Watershed Partners
- Sand Creek Watershed Partners
- Streamside Ecological Services
- Thornapple River Watershed Council
- Trout Unlimited
- Van Buren Conservation District
- Village of Middleville
- West Michigan Environmental Action Council
- White River Watershed Partners

Appendix C: Local Water Quality Donation Fund Structure

Key elements of the proposed funding model provided below.



- Enable counties to collect a voluntary watershed contribution through property tax bills.
- Require counties to pass funding through to an existing regional planning body.
- Require regional planning bodies to establish one or more watershed advisory councils that would guide funding allocations.
- Enable regional planning bodies to enter into cooperative agreements with each other to enhance coordination of efforts and fill capacity where needed.
- Enable regional planning bodies, in coordination with member counties, to tailor the initiative to suit Michigan’s varying interests. The following elements would be determined by each region.
 - A voluntary program could be structured as either an opt-in or an opt-out system. Regional planning bodies and counties are well suited to determine the structure that will fit their goals.
 - A voluntary watershed contribution as well as county and regional administrative expenses should be capped at a specified rate (yet to be determined). Regions and counties would be able to determine the rates up to the cap that would be appropriate for their constituents.
 - Funding allocations dedicated to each county and watershed as well as allocations dedicated to on-the-ground projects and staff support should be determined at the regional level to meet the unique needs of the watersheds in the region.
 - Watershed management can be conducted at a wide range of scales. Regions are well suited to evaluate the scale at which programs should be implemented to reflect social dynamics and existing organizational structures.

Appendix D: Questions and Answers About the Funding Framework

In addition to the topics summarized in the report, participants posed many questions during the regional roundtable meetings. The following is a summary of questions and comments.

- Q: What is the role of the State in the proposed funding framework?
- A: The state legislature would need to pass legislation to enable the funding framework. Once implemented, funding and decision making would be retained at the regional level and would not rely on state government.

- Q: Could funding be used for lobbying or advocacy?
- A: Because the funding would be collected and administered by governmental entities and would represent public monies, lobbying and advocacy work would not be eligible for funding the proposed funding framework.

- Q: Who makes funding decisions?
- A: Under the proposed funding framework, regions would establish one or more watershed advisory groups that would guide the allocation of funds. These watershed advisory groups would make recommendations to the respective regional planning organization which would retain the final authority to make decisions regarding the allocation of public funds as an instrument of government.

- Q: What is eligible for funding?
- A: Funding could be used to support watershed management activities. The original intent of the funding was to support staff time and operating expenses for organizations working on watershed management, development of watershed plans, and implementation of activities identified in watershed plans. This would include on-the-ground restoration activities and educational efforts consistent with watershed goals. Funding decisions would be led by watershed advisory groups.

- Q: Why not try to get additional funding from the state or federal government?
- A: Watershed leaders should be trying to raise funding from multiple sources. While others have prioritized strategies to increase funding, partners in West Michigan decided to focus their efforts to develop new sources of local funding. If successful, this funding would rely less on legislators and bureaucrats in Lansing and Washington, D.C. by increasing local capacity to fund local priorities.

- Q: Could community foundations serve as the fiduciary?
- A: There were multiple factors that led to nominating regional planning bodies as the fiduciary. First, because funding would be collected through property tax dollars, it would be considered public funds. There are existing administrative mechanisms in place that could be used to facilitate the flow of funding from property taxes to a regional planning body. Additionally, regional planning organizations are an instrument of government with more consistent decision making and accountability structures in place that align with priorities identified by stakeholders. Furthermore, regional planning organizations routinely administer processes to determine allocation of scarce resources among member communities. These systems will help facilitate administration of funding.

Finally, with some notable exceptions, many community foundations operate on a smaller geographic scale than regional planning organizations, which could increase the number of fiduciary organizations, and potentially limit operating the funding program on a watershed scale.

- Q: Could revenue projections be developed by region to better understand the potential funding amounts that could be generated through the program?
- A: Yes, revenue projections could be developed this way and would provide valuable context for discussions within regions. Additional funding would be necessary to complete such analysis.
- Q: Recognizing capacity constraints in the Upper Peninsula, would it be possible to structure the program so there is one region for the entirety of the Upper Peninsula?
- A: The intent of the effort is to structure the funding framework to position Michigan's regions for success. Under the proposed framework, if there is consensus among partners in the Upper Peninsula that such an approach would be desirable, regional partners could establish mechanisms to function as a single region. The proposed framework anticipates instances where regions may desire to partner and would enable them to do so through memoranda of agreement or similar arrangements.
- Q: Would this create another layer of funding and increase competition among watershed groups?
- A: The initiative would create a new source of funding that would have different administrative requirements than existing sources. However, the intent of the effort is that it would be more locally driven and responsive to local needs. Watershed organizations would be encouraged to collaborate rather than compete within their region as part of decision-making processes when funding decisions are made.
- Q: If municipalities and counties are collecting voluntary watershed contributions through property taxes, won't that increase their work? Would they require administrative fees?
- A: Most local units of government are facing budgetary constraints. It is reasonable to assume they would expect sufficient funding for their expenses to administer the program.
- Q: How will this funding initiative consider equitable distribution of funding within and among regions?
- A: The goal of this effort has focused on developing new sources of funding to support watershed management on a more local level than traditional models that rely on state government support. The funding framework would establish a mechanism to raise funds by region. Partners have prioritized keeping these funds within regions to enhance the viability of implementing the initiative and raising funds because residents will be more likely to contribute to water quality programs that directly impact their communities. A voluntary funding mechanism that transferred money among regions would likely rely on state government to collect and administer funds, which may decrease the viability of implementing the program, participation rates, and ultimately funding raised. Within regions, distribution of funds would be decided by regional leaders to reflect community priorities. Matters of equity should be considered in determining funding allocations along with water quality conditions and many other factors. Out of respect for the fact that a one-size-fits-all strategy will not adequately address these concerns on a statewide basis nor provide an inclusive process, these decisions should be made at the regional level with community support.

- Q: There are many other funding mechanisms that could be put into place. Why should this mechanism be advanced as opposed to those alternatives?
- A: There are many other potential funding mechanisms that could be pursued. This initiative evaluated multiple alternatives and, through a consensus-building process, advanced the proposal to develop a voluntary watershed contribution. This funding mechanism was advanced recognizing Michigan's political landscape to develop a model that could be implemented in the near term. It was selected among alternatives because it minimizes the creation of new bureaucracies and administrative structures and functions on a regional watershed scale that retains decision-making at the local level.

- Q: In rural regions and those with high percentages of public lands, there are fewer people and property owners than other parts of the state. Will this affect the ability to generate funding in these regions?
- A: With fewer property owners, there may be lower levels of funding generated through the initiative. However, many of these areas have fewer impairments than dense, high-population watersheds that may require additional restoration.

- Q: How does the funding framework address second homes or vacant land?
- A: People who own multiple properties, whether developed or not, would be able to contribute for each property. Some may choose to do so for their primary residence but also their secondary residence, or vacant property, as it may be a vacation property where water resources are also important.



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