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To: "Betsy Braid" <bbraid@micorn.org>
Date: 10/9/2009 3:18 PM
Subject: Please Repeal the Governor's Executive Order

On behalf of the 920 corn farmer members of the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), I strongly urge you to overturn Executive Order 2009-45 as put forth by Governor Jennifer Granholm. While we are grateful the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) remains as a separate department, we are strongly opposed to the decision to remove the authority of the Commission of Agriculture. By giving the sole power to oversee the MDA to the department director and by giving the Governor the ability to appoint the department director, this executive order further centralizes power within the Executive Office, and removes accountability of programs affecting agriculture from the citizens. The Commission of Agriculture is a fine-tuned body that has served our industry well for more than forty years; abolishing that system will only serve to cripple one of the only sectors of Michigan's economy that is thriving.

Since its establishment in 1965, the Commission of Agriculture has allowed for continuity and consistency of programs affecting Michigan's \$71.3 billion agricultural industry. The current system makes the MDA director accountable to a citizen-based commission that represents the interests of agricultural stakeholders. For years, the commission has worked in close partnership with agriculture and other sectors, including the Department of Agriculture, to build strong policies supportive of forward-looking agricultural practices and opportunities. By relegating the Ag Commission from the primary policy setting body for the Department to an advisory role only, the Executive Order strips agricultural stakeholders of their ability to be directly involved in the management of the state's diverse and complex agriculture department. Replacing the open style of the Commission with a closed, behind-doors approach denies the people of Michigan the transparency and accountability they deserve.

The Executive Order also abolishes the pesticide advisory council and the Agriculture Preservation Fund Board. Abolishing the Agriculture Preservation Fund Board will put the sole authority for distribution of grants from PA 116 payback funds into the hands of the Director of the Department of Agriculture and eliminates the opportunity for critical agricultural stakeholder involvement.

The changes to the Department of Agriculture do not propose any further government efficiency, nor will they save a single taxpayer dollar. Agriculture is an economic driver that will advance a new Michigan and it deserves your support now, more than ever. Michigan's agricultural output, food manufacturing and ethanol production are a \$71 billion business that has been and continues to grow. More than one million jobs in Michigan are agriculturally-related and the potential to continue to grow that number has not yet been realized. On behalf of the MCGA and all of Michigan agriculture, we urge you to push for the repeal of Executive Order 2009-45

and give Michigan's bright agricultural industry a chance to shine.

Sincerely,

Jody E. Pollok-Newsom

Executive Director

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