



Michigan Business & Professional Association
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**Statement of
Jennifer Kluge, President & CEO
Michigan Business & Professional Association
and Michigan Food & Beverage Association
November 8th, 2011**

I am submitting this statement on behalf of the more than 20,000 members of the Michigan Business & Professional Association and the Michigan Food and Beverage Association.

The Michigan Business & Professional Association is a business trade organization that represents over 20,000 members who employ over 160,000 people throughout the State of Michigan. It is the fastest growing business association in the Midwest.

The Michigan Food and Beverage Association represents more than 3,500 members who employ over 60,000 persons throughout the State of Michigan. Members include independent grocers, convenience store operators, local food chains, restaurants, food establishments, taverns, gas station operators, manufacturers, processors, wholesalers and brokers.

Clearly, the organizations' members can be classified as "small business." That is why the matter of Michigan experiment with the deregulation of the state's electricity market through the Electric Choice program is so important. You see experience with Electric Choice from 2000 through 2008 indicates that the non-utility energy marketers and brokers – the so-called "alternative energy suppliers – had virtually no interest in the serving Michigan's small business and residential electricity consumers. Instead, attention was focused on the largest electricity users and organizations with sophisticated energy buyers.

Worse, the costs avoided by the customers that migrated to Electric Choice in pursuit of short-term savings rolled back on the remaining customers of Michigan regulated utilities — in short, my associations' members. That is not fair.

Three years ago, the Legislature adopted, with overwhelming bipartisan support, policies to limit this sort of market gamesmanship. We supported that path in 2008 and we continue to support those policies today.

I encourage the members of the committee to maintain in their present form the comprehensive energy policies adopted just three years ago.

From our perspective they are working.

Thank you.