SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

10/28/2013

To: Senator Nofs and members of the
Senate Energy and Technology Committee

Sierra Club Urges a NO vote on SB 314 (Jones)– Ending Michigan's Landfill Yard Waste Ban; Killing the Composting Industry and Increasing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Dear Senator Nofs and members of the Senate Energy and Technology Committee,

We appreciate you taking time to consider our position on SB 314.

In 1990 the legislature enacted a ban prohibiting yard waste from disposal in Michigan landfills. The ban took effect in 1995 and since then, Michigan has developed a thriving commercial compost industry. This industry now comprises many municipal composting facilities and approximately 40 privately operated composting businesses. **The ban was enacted because valuable landfill space was being wasted on organic yard debris – a recyclable commodity that when composted creates far more jobs per ton than if the materials were buried in a landfill or burned in an incinerator**. Since the ban was enacted, Michigan companies and municipalities have composted millions of dollars worth of organic materials, much of which is marketed through Michigan retailers and landscapers.

Ending this ban will kill the thriving commercial composting industry, put people out of work, reduce tax revenue for communities and the state, and increase greenhouse gas pollution.

In the long run, SB 314 would directly result in added costs to the State of Michigan and private citizens. Rather than weakening existing laws protecting Michigan's landfill space and environment, the Legislature should be looking for ways to support the state's existing composting and recycling industries, which employ thousands of Michigan residents. Recycling and composting both create far more jobs per ton of waste than landfilling or incineration, and are better for the environment as well.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote NO on SB 314. Votes pertaining to this bill will be included in the Sierra Club's legislative scorecard.

Sincerely,

Mike Berkowitz
Legislative and Political Director
Sierra Club Michigan Chapter

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