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Senate Energy and Technology Committee Chairman Nofs and Members:

RE: Senate Bill 314

On a daily basis, we discard materials that no longer serve their original purpose. After we cut and bag our grass clippings and rake the leaves, we discard the material. Currently, the most common path for discarded yard clippings is collection from the curb, transportation to and processing at a compost facility. Senate Bill 314 provides another choice for management of yard clippings—collection from the curb, transportation to and processing at an energy-producing landfill. Far from being a waste of yard clippings, this type of management is a utilization of this organic material for the production of base load renewable energy. This is consistent with Michigan's Solid Waste Policy.

Yard clippings can be successfully utilized to make finished compost or to increase renewable energy. Unfortunately, state policy dictates that yard clippings cannot be utilized in energy-producing landfills. Glass bottles and jars can successfully be remade into new containers or as an aggregate (substituting for sand) in drainage projects or as an additive to asphalt. Fortunately, the state is not picking winners or losers by mandating the type of utilization of glass. The same cannot be said for yard clippings.

Yard clippings are discards—commonly understood to be waste. There are inherent environmental concerns with the management of yard clippings, regardless of the process used. We have an interest in responsibly managing this and other wastes to protect our natural environment (groundwater and air quality). Part 115 of Act 451 of 1994 heavily regulates landfills and to a lesser extent compost sites. Under the provisions of Senate Bill 314, energy-producing landfills would be subject to increased regulatory oversight in exchange for the opportunity to accept yard clippings.

Senate Bill 314 reinforces and enhances the state's role of environmental protection while allowing communities to determine which management option for yard clippings best fits their lifestyle and economic conditions.

Each element of the proposed language addressing local control is a layer that works within the current framework. Each layer ensures that all residents are represented—those with public systems and those who rely on private systems.

1. Page 3, Lines 12-15

The intent of this language is to make clear the authority of counties that host energy-producing landfills through the county solid waste planning process. County planning is a public process that requires the approval of 2/3 of the municipalities in the county. (Public and private system)

2. Page 3, Lines 16-20

The intent of this language is to require a public process (action by vote) for the determination of whether a publicly owned and operated energy-producing landfill can accept yard clippings. (Public system)

3. Page 3, Lines 21-26

The intent of this language is to require a public process for the determination of whether publicly operated management and transportation system for yard clippings can deliver yard clippings to an energy-producing landfill. (Public system)

Senate Bill 314 is designed to acknowledge the engineering and technical capabilities of energy-producing landfills while preserving the interest of communities to promote the environmental culture they prefer. We encourage your support of Senate Bill 314.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tonia M. Olson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Tonia M. Olson
Director of Governmental and Community Relations