



# elements

TURNING ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES INTO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES | SUMMER 2010

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## Michigan's Future is in Your Hands

BY PAM BIERZYNSKI

*WARNING: Do not expect that your elected officials will vote in ways that are consistent with your values.*

As Michigan LCV prepares for the upcoming elections, particularly the Aug. 3 primaries, we'd like you to keep something in mind.

Over the last year and a half, Michigan LCV has concentrated our efforts in tracking the legislative votes related to four environmental priorities: Sustainable natural resource funding, protecting our children's health, addressing the threat of global warming, and protecting our water.

Although our environmental priorities are not overtly partisan issues, sadly, that is exactly what they have become during the 2009-2010 legislative session and over the last 30 years. We have gone from a time when conservation legislation could unite both sides of the aisle to a time when the intrusion of raw partisan politics stands in the way of sound legislative decision-making.

The overwhelmingly partisan trend in the 2009-2010 *Michigan Environmental Scorecard* statistics shown below is a prime example. Unfortunately, the real losers in all of this are the citizens of Michigan.

But it hasn't always been this way. Michigan once exemplified bipartisan leadership on conservation and environmental protection. Dating back to the days of Gov. William Milliken, Michigan hasn't been afraid to show the rest of the nation how much we value our Great Lakes, our forests, and every stream, river, and inland lake.

Fortunately, there are some elected officials who still share this vision of Michigan and have demonstrated it through their actions. And yes, such leaders do exist in both parties, but you have to look harder to find them. These lawmakers see a future of renewable energy, children's health and robust tourism and recreation.

As you cast your vote this primary and general election season, take the time to review the policies of every candidate running. Remember that they are human; susceptible to the precarious partisan political world that surrounds them, and easily swayed by choices riddled with quick financial gain and immediate political advancement. Look closely at their histories and their actions, and not just their campaign sound bites. Do your own research and make informed decisions. Remember: Michigan's future is in your hands. ■

### 2009-2010 Michigan Environmental Scorecard: At-A-Glance

#### House of Representatives

##### AVERAGES

House = 67%  
Democrats = 89%  
Republicans = 31%

##### LEADERSHIP

Speaker of the House: Dillon, A. (D-17) = 78%  
Majority Floor Leader: Angerer, K (D-55) = 100%  
Assistant Majority Leader:  
Meadows, M. (D-69) = 100%

#### Senate

##### AVERAGES

Senate = 47%  
Democrats = 95%  
Republicans = 11%

##### LEADERSHIP

Majority Leader: Bishop, M. (R-12) = 0%  
Assistant Majority Leader:  
McManus, M. (R-35) = 0%  
Majority Floor Leader: Cropsey, A. (R-33) = 20%

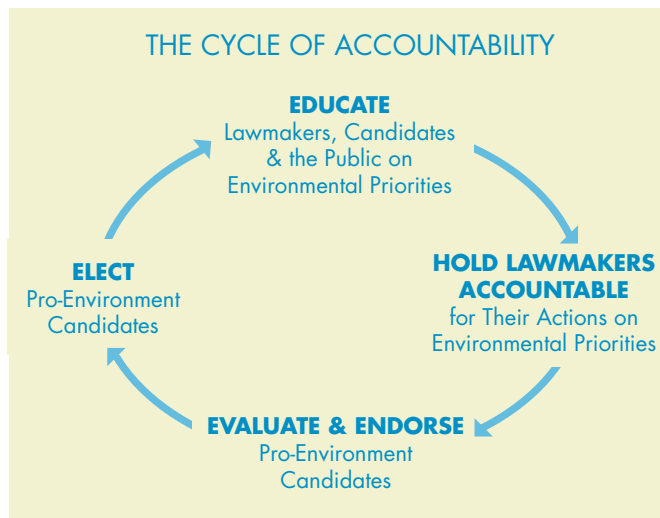
# What is the Cycle of Accountability?



Every day I am asked what distinguishes Michigan LCV from other organizations. “I give to my local watershed organization”, I am told, “Isn’t that enough?”

Local watershed organizations...and land use organizations...and river protection organizations...and the host of other environmental/conservation entities.... do incredible work, and are an essential part of our heritage of environmental protection here in Michigan.

Michigan LCV is different, however, because we exist and function at the nexus between environmental protection and political action. Unlike other organizations we are able to work throughout—what we call—the “Cycle of Accountability”.



While most environmental organizations work purely on the 501(c)(3) education components, Michigan LCV is able to nimbly move to other areas of the Cycle due to our structure, which includes a 501(c)(4) and a Political Action Committee (PAC). Our ability to impact elections becomes so important when you take into account the power our elected officials have over environmental rules and regulations.

Our goals, purely and simply, are:

1. Elect good, strong pro-environment candidates to office
2. Educate them on the issues, which allows us to pass strong laws to protect the environment

3. Hold lawmakers accountable for their actions, through public and media education.

As you read through the articles contained in this edition of *Elements*, you will see facets of each piece of our work. As we head into the primary and general elections, our focus is keenly on goal #1: we are working to elect/re-elect strong environmental voices to offices throughout state government, including the legislature, some county commissions, and municipalities.

In the past few months we've been very engaged in goal #2: educating the legislature, candidates for office, and the general public on such pressing issues as Great Lakes drilling, invasive Asian carp, clean, renewable energy policy, and healthy communities. Our educational efforts have included activities like our Gubernatorial Forum, the publication of our Gubernatorial Briefing Book, and outreach to candidates and communities throughout the state.

We've also, of late, moved into goal #3: holding our current elected officials accountable for their actions, through the publication of our 2009-2010 *Michigan Environmental Scorecard* and our stand-alone accountability websites.

Each element of this work is critical to ensuring that the Cycle is complete, that elected officials (or wanna-be elected officials) understand that there are not only top notch policy shops in Michigan to assist with the development of sound watershed or land use practices, but that there is a watch dog here, too, that keeps a keen eye on what they're up to...and lets you, the voters, know what's really happening in Lansing.

Michigan LCV's unique involvement in both the political and educational aspects of environmental protection allows me to see just how interconnected those two things are: real positive environmental change cannot happen without strong political leadership, and voters cannot elect strong political leaders without honest objective information about their lawmakers and potential lawmakers. We work hard everyday to give voters the tools and information necessary to make informed decisions, but we can't be with you in the voting booth. In the end, it's up to YOU and your friends and neighbors: you are the “decision makers” in the upcoming primary and general elections. What will Michigan's future look like? I can't say for sure, but I do know that the choices voters make this fall will shape the fate of our great state. ■

## Growing Our Team

Michigan LCV is proud to welcome three new staff members, Jeff Kart (Online Communications Director), Ryan Werder (Political Director), and Brianna Gerard (Events Director); and four new board members, Mayor George Heartwell, Peter Kotila, Dr. Sanjiv Sinha, and Mark Stranahan.

Together our new staff and board members bring to Michigan LCV an impressive wealth of knowledge and expertise across many diverse professional, political, and environmental fields. We are lucky to have them. To read their full bios, check out [www.michiganlcv.org](http://www.michiganlcv.org). ■



Michigan Radio's Jennifer White moderates gubernatorial candidates Rick Snyder, Virg Bernero, and Tom George at Michigan LCV Education Fund's 2010 Gubernatorial Candidate Forum.

# Governing the Great Lakes State

BY PAM BIERZYNSKI

In a time when Michigan is facing incredible economic and ecological adversity, our next governor faces the daunting challenge of leading Michigan out of a recession and rebuilding our state's economy in a way that will be sustainable in the 21st century. Not only will our next chief executive officer assume responsibility for our struggling economy; he also will become a steward of our 3,288 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, 11,037 inland lakes, 36,350 miles of rivers, 19.3 million acres of forests, 5.5 million acres of wetlands, and be responsible for protecting the health and well-being of Michigan's almost 10 million citizens.

It is critically important that Michigan's next governor recognize the connection between environmental protection and economic security.

To help Michiganders decipher which gubernatorial candidates understand this concept, the Michigan LCV Education Fund in partnership with the Detroit Free Press, Michigan Radio, and Conserv America, kicked off the election season on May 12 at Central Michigan University with the first nonpartisan Gubernatorial Candidate Forum. Our mission was simple: to engage the candidates in a public discussion about the role of Michigan's chief executive in rebuilding our economy and safeguarding our natural resources.

Republicans Rick Snyder and Tom George and Democrat Virg Bernero fielded questions from Ron Dzwonkowski of the Detroit Free

Press and Vince Duffy of Michigan Radio about the state's environmental and economic future, two issues that are inextricably linked. (Unfortunately, not every candidate running for governor agreed to participate in the forum. The unwillingness of the other four candidates to participate in this critical discussion sends a telling message in itself.)

Listeners were treated to a lively discussion of issues ranging from wind turbines in the Great Lakes and stricter renewable energy standards to environmental justice and the impacts of invasive species on our Great Lakes.

While there were definite distinctions between the candidates on several topics, one thing was clear: All the candidates need to bone up on the issues. Fortunately, we have

some light reading we're recommending: *Governing the Great Lakes State: An Environmental Policy Guide for Michigan's Chief Executive 2010*. Published this spring by Michigan LCV Education Fund and available on our website, this document outlines the policies and actions that the governor's office is encouraged to take to effectively and efficiently protect Michigan's air, land, and water.

The incredible potential of the Great Lakes state will not be realized without strong leadership from Lansing. We hope that a little extra work now, and meeting with candidates one-on-one to educate them on our priority issues, will pay off in the long run.

If you missed the forum, check out [www.michiganlcvedfund.org](http://www.michiganlcvedfund.org) for highlights, media coverage, and full audio and video. ■



Michigan LCV Deputy Director Kerry Duggan and Executive Director Lisa Wozniak pause for a group shot at the Gubernatorial Candidate Forum with candidate hopefuls Virg Bernero, Rick Snyder, and Tom George.

# THE HEAT IS ON

BY MARK NEISLER

These days, reading the news or watching the TV is unbearable. The BP oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico is the worst environmental disaster in history. The oil is still pouring out as of this writing, and is expected to continue until August. As we envision the precious Louisiana coastline under assault, with brown pelicans and other species coated with oil and thousands of innocent people in economic peril, we deserve answers as to how Congress will prevent this from happening again.

Well Congress, we have a solution for you—implement comprehensive clean energy and climate change legislation.

In a recent New York Times opinion editorial, columnist Thomas Friedman refers to two significant moments in the past (the terrorist bombings of the Twin Towers and the catastrophic destruction of Hurricane Katrina) when great policy could have been shaped in the wake of tragedy. Instead, the moments were squandered.

According to Friedman, just like those tragic events, the Deepwater Horizon disaster has the same potential to “energize the country to do something really important and lasting that is too hard to do in normal times.” Fortunately for Congress, we already know what that ‘really important’ something is.

Almost one year ago, the U.S. House of Representatives took the first step in passing the ambitious American Clean Energy and Security Act, the most historic environmental bill of our lifetime. It represented

America’s first comprehensive effort to build a new, clean energy economy and limit our dependence on dirty fossil fuels.

In May, Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), introduced the American Power Act (APA), the Senate’s version of comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation. Even though it has been stalled in several committees because of an overwhelming national focus on the health care debate and immigration policy, the Senate still has the opportunity to take that historic bill one step further.

In order for America to secure a clean energy future, the American Power Act must see debate and passage on the floor of the U.S. Senate. We are working in close cooperation with our partners to make sure that happens.

It is time for America’s leaders to get serious about comprehensive clean energy and climate policy that will reduce our oil dependence, enhance our security, revitalize our economy, and protect our environment. Every day the Senate fails to pass comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation, we put our economy, our national security and our environment at greater risk.

By implementing the American Power Act, we can change all of that. Let’s not squander this moment. Let’s tap into the momentum of this disaster and use it to create the positive environmental change for which we have all been working toward. ■

## Do Your Elected Officials Care?

BY PAM BIERZYNSKI

Lately it seems that everyone claims to be “going green.” It’s easy to say you support clean energy, fresh food, clean water and open space. However, good intentions are worthless without action.

Are you curious which legislators are voting to protect Michigan’s environment and which are not holding up their end of the bargain? Don’t have the time to track every elected official’s voting record? Don’t worry, Michigan LCV does it for you! We provide the resources you need to learn which elected officials really care about the environment ... and to hold others accountable for their actions.

In past years, we exclusively published the *Michigan Environmental Scorecard*, a document that tracks the voting records of legislators on critical legislation that affects our environment. This year, we added an online interactive component to the *Scorecard*, which allows you to find your legislators by ZIP Code, see a lifetime score, scores for the current and recent sessions, lawmaker contact information, and links to campaign finance reports. We also added a series of accountability websites to arm you with facts about elected officials and the disparity between their words and actions.



We released the *2009-2010 Michigan Environmental Scorecard* in May. It highlights key votes during the legislative session in Lansing and gives an all-encompassing picture of the conservation and environmental priorities of Michigan’s lawmakers. While the report is far from a glowing review of our state government, it is a top-notch analysis of the state of the state. We invite you to check out [www.michiganlcv.org/scorecard](http://www.michiganlcv.org/scorecard) and encourage your colleagues, friends and neighbors to do the same.

This spring, we also launched a series of accountability websites. Our first targets were: Sen. Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester), and Reps. Jeff Mayes (D-Bay City), Paul Opsommer (R-DeWitt), Rick Jones (R-Grand Ledge), and Martin Griffin (D-Jackson). Check out [www.michiganlcv.org/do-your-elected-officials-care](http://www.michiganlcv.org/do-your-elected-officials-care) for more details.

It is essential that we have leaders in Lansing who recognize the connection between our state’s economic and environmental health. But it’s not enough to just recognize it. Our elected officials must put their words into action. And as they do, they should know that Michigan LCV and our supporters are watching them closely. ■

# Michigan Issue Update

BY HANNAH SMITH

School may be out for the summer, but the Legislature is (technically) in. This being an election year, lawmakers are more likely to be found out on the campaign trail than in Lansing. But that doesn't mean they're off the hook in terms of protecting our environment. As the weather warms up and Michiganders are inevitably drawn to the outdoors, the environmental challenges faced by our state become glaringly clear:

- The Great Lakes, one of the greatest draws of out-of-state tourism to Michigan, are still threatened by an Asian carp invasion. Asian carp in the lakes would threaten the fishing industry (they tend to out-compete native fish), as well as the recreational boating crowd (the carp are skittish and leap out of the water when disturbed, causing significant damage to anything and anybody in their way). The Great Lakes Congressional Task Force sent a letter to Senate leadership in late May, calling for complete hydrological separation of the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River watershed. Since the discovery of a live Bighead Carp beyond the Chicago shipping canal in June, legislators at both the state and federal level have stepped up their efforts to defend the lakes from the ravenous invasive fish. Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow in particular has shown great leadership on this issue by co-sponsoring the "Permanent Prevention of Asian Carp Act", which would expedite the study of proposed hydrological separation of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Watershed.
- Numerous Great Lakes and inland beaches face closures due to increased bacteria levels. Bacteria from agricultural runoff and inadequate sewage and stormwater systems are the culprits here. In May, more than 3.5 billion gallons of raw sewage and industrial waste poured into Detroit-area waterways, when rain overwhelmed the city's sewer system. Visit [www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/beach/) to find out if your local beach is closed.
- Phosphorus overload also threatens Michigan waters. The chemical, used in fertilizers, causes rapid aquatic vegetation growth and nasty algae blooms. House Bill 5368, which is currently in the House Great Lakes and Environment Committee, would prohibit the use of residential fertilizers containing phosphorus.
- The Great Lakes are still vulnerable to oil and gas drilling. Drilling is currently illegal under state law, but House Democrats don't want to take any risks. They are calling for a permanent constitutional ban on drilling, which would appear on the November ballot if it passes the Legislature.
- And serious attention needs to be paid to the agency responsible for regulating and protecting our natural resources --- the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). The grossly underfunded agency, which has lost 75% of its funding since 2002, is struggling to do its job, from paying for infrastructure repairs in state parks to regulating overwhelming air pollution in Michigan

Follow the issues and legislative activity at [michiganlcv.org](http://michiganlcv.org), and don't let your lawmakers use the hot and humid weather as an excuse to lie down on the job.

cities. The consideration lawmakers do (or don't) give to the DNRE when making budgetary decisions this year will have a long-lasting effect on the quality of our state's environmental and recreational resources.

We're not on summer vacation here at Michigan LCV, and we'll be keeping a close eye on various other pieces of legislation in the coming months: House Bill 5220, which would change pollution standards and fee-rates under the Clean Air

Act; House Bill 5558, which would establish a surcharge of \$7.50/ton on trash dumped in Michigan; Senate Bill 437, which would change brownfield cleanup standards; House Bill 4699, which would ban the toxic flame retardant deca-BDE, and House Bills 4763-7469, which would inform consumers of toxic chemicals in children's products.

Follow the issues and legislative activity at [michiganlcv.org](http://michiganlcv.org), and don't let your lawmakers use the hot and humid weather as an excuse to lie down on the job. ■



# Michigan LCV Rolls Out Endorsements

BY RYAN WERDER

*“It is very human to be moved by place, by something larger than yourself. It is part of how we relate to each other in Michigan—our common attraction to nature. These places need champions.”*

—Lana Pollack, Michigan LCV Director Emeritus

For more than 10 years, Michigan LCV has worked to elect officials who actively support the environment—and defeat shortsighted measures that jeopardize the long-term health of our communities. But we've only been able to do that because of you, the voters.

As we prepare for the 2010 election, Michigan LCV is working to ensure that our members and supporters have access to the information they need to cast well-educated votes—through our endorsement programs and campaign support for pro-environment issues.

We use a comprehensive process to vet candidates before we consider endorsing them.

To earn our endorsement, candidates first complete a Michigan LCV questionnaire, which requires candidates to articulate clear positions on the most pressing environmental and conservation issues facing Michigan.

Those candidates that demonstrate satisfactory environmental values are then asked to complete an in-person interview with Michigan LCV

staff and board members. In these interviews, we evaluate a candidate's environmental views, and their viability as a candidate.

## ENDORSEMENTS 2010

This summer, we are pleased to announce our first round of endorsements—

**Dan Scripps, House District 101**  
**Mary Valentine, Senate District 34**  
**Deb Kennedy, House District 23**  
**Lisa Brown, House District 39**

Each of these candidates are true environmental champions who recognize the connection between environmental protection and economic security, and will be the leaders we need in Lansing to make our vision a reality.

Stay tuned to [www.michiganlcv.org](http://www.michiganlcv.org) for the latest endorsements as we announce them in the coming months. ■

## Have You Seen Us?

BY JEFF KART

Some people don't understand social media. Some are averse to it. But platforms like Twitter and Facebook are fast becoming a dominant force in communications. And participating in either of them is like going to a cocktail party and only having to talk to the people you like. Doesn't that sound nice?

In that regard, the Michigan League of Conservation Voters has been boldly moving forward with Tweeting and Facebooking to draw in readers and serve members.

First off, our Facebook page is online at [facebook.com/michiganlcv](http://facebook.com/michiganlcv). Our Twitter page is at [twitter.com/michiganlcv](http://twitter.com/michiganlcv). Both addresses are easy to remember. Both services allow you to follow what's happening on our websites, and in Michigan and national environmental circles. When we receive coverage in traditional and new media (which has been happening a lot lately), you'll see it on our Twitter and Facebook pages, and our websites.

Some recent postings on Facebook include:

- Lana Pollack to Serve on International Joint Commission
- Dan Scripps, an Environmental Defender, Kicks Off Our Election Season Endorsements
- Biden: New Midland battery plant a step toward U.S. oil independence



- Massive Rubber Ducky Reminds Parents About the Dangers of Toxic Toys
- Michigan House Pedaling Good Policy With ‘Complete Streets.’

Along with some recent Tweets:

- The latest Michigan Political Week in Review includes the latest polling in the race for governor
- Opportunity Knocks: Let's Open the Door to Clean Energy, President Obama
- What do 2,340, 4 and 0 have in common? MLCV Board Member Doug Glancy has ideas.

For those of you who've been following us on Facebook or Twitter, thanks. The number of people who follow our Twitter feed has been growing steadily, from around 300 to more than 400 in the last month alone. Since our Facebook page was created around May 25, our number of friends (now called “Likes”) has grown to about 250 people.

Tell your friends to follow us, too. Stay informed. And don't be afraid to retweet us, tweet at us or comment and post on the Facebook page. If some or all of this doesn't make sense, feel free to bug Jeff Kart at [jeff@michiganlcv.org](mailto:jeff@michiganlcv.org). ■

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# And the Beat Goes On...

## Introducing Jeff Kart, Michigan LCV Online Communications Director



I'm one of the newer people around here. I landed at the Michigan League of Conservation Voters after spending 14 years as a journalist for The Bay City Times. I spent the last half of those years covering the environmental beat in the Saginaw Bay watershed, Michigan's largest. My title here is Online Communications Director, which means I'm the guy who helps keep our two websites, for the Michigan LCV and Michigan LCV Education Fund, filled with fresh copy. I'm also the one who keeps our Twitter and Facebook feeds updated. And I make sure the trains run on time.

I'm a consultant to Michigan LCV, which means I also have other irons in the fire, namely writing for TreeHugger.com and PlanetGreen.com, two arms of the Discovery network. I also do work for OnEarth Magazine, Got2BeGreen.com and other outlets. My forte, you might say, is social networking and connecting people with science and public policy. So that seems to fit in nicely with the work being done here at the Michigan LCV.

I'm also pursuing an environmental science degree via the University of Illinois-Springfield. I could be done as soon as next year, fingers crossed. The good folks at the White Pine Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America named me journalist of the year for 2009, and I've won a number of other awards for writing and reporting. I'm also a fellow of the Metcalf Institute, the Great Waters Institute, the Institutes for Journalism and Natural Resources, and the Scripps Howard Institute. In other words, I've been trained by the best, and I'm a big thinker.

I live in lovely Bay City, Michigan, and am married to Suzanne, a marketing genius for the Learning Resources Network. We have two daughters, a dog and cat. I enjoy camping, stories that go viral, long walks on the beach and tunes from the 1980s, when music peaked. ■

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