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December 11, 2018

The Honorable Tom Leonard
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Speaker Leonard:

This letter is being sent in opposition to Senate Bill 1196. Passage and enactment of this bill is dangerous to communities in Michigan and would allow increased hazardous waste disposal in the state and most significantly in Wayne County communities in my district.

The senate bill, introduced only last month, would allow hazardous waste disposal facilities across Michigan to accept ten times more radioactive waste than what is currently permissible under state law. In fact, the legislation proposes to increase TENORM (technologically enhanced, naturally occurring radioactive material) disposal levels above the accepted standard of 50 picocuries per gram, as proposed in a February 2015 report from the Michigan TENORM Disposal Advisory Panel created by Governor Rick Snyder. Most TENORM waste is a byproduct of the hydraulic fracturing process for oil and natural gas, as well as from the mining industry, water treatment process, and some consumer products.

TENORM materials and the hazards associated with them are not well understood. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, according to its own website, admits they “do not completely understand all the potential radiation exposure risks it presents to humans and the environment.” We should not weaken any environmental regulations at the state or federal level if we don’t understand the potential risks.

The aim of this bill would clearly benefit only one Type I disposal facility permitted to accept hazardous waste materials in Michigan. This facility, US Ecology Michigan, is located in Wayne County—where 1.7 million residents call home—and is looking to expand its facility to specifically take in more TENORM materials from out of state. In response, there is building opposition, including myself. The Wayne County Commission has also passed a resolution opposing the expansion plan for the facility.

The policy of the bill, as well as the process, is concerning. Recently, Senate Bill 1196 was expedited through the legislative process and passed the Michigan State Senate last week. In the

Michigan House it advanced out of the Natural Resources Committee and could be voted on as soon as this week.

We must stand up for the health and safety of Michigan's future generations and uphold strong environmental safeguards long-term—not cater to corporate interests. I would have hoped all Michigan leaders learned something from the Flint water crisis, but apparently not. On behalf of my constituents and all the leaders, stakeholders, and communities who oppose this harmful bill, we urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1196 and not bring the bill to a vote.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of our citizens and the environment should be our shared top priority. We should not be passing bills to allow more radioactive waste in Michigan. This is an issue that should rise above party. Thank you for your urgent attention and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



DEBBIE DINGELL
Member of Congress

CC: House Speaker Pro Tempore, Lee Chatfield
Majority Floor Leader, Dan Lauwers
Democratic Leader, Sam Singh
Democratic Floor Leader, Christine Greig
Representative Kristy Pagan