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Enviros to Legislature, Governor: Get your #!%&*! Together and Solve it Now!

***Continued budget dawdling in Lansing poised to irreparably harm state's
environmental treasures, natural resource-based economy***

Noting the approaching Earth Day celebrations, a sweeping coalition of state environmental leaders today served notice they have run out of patience with Lansing politicians' tepid attempts to resolve a monstrous budget crisis that threatens Michigan's water, air, land and public health.

"It's deplorable and inexcusable that the state's critical natural resource protections are on the brink of crumbling while our leaders posture and dither while taking halfhearted, ineffective measure to meet this challenge," said Andy Buchsbaum, National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Regional Director.

Both budget efficiencies and new revenues are needed to safeguard the state's incredible natural treasures that are synonymous with quality of life and a vibrant natural resource-based economy. Today's press statement from environmental leaders comes as Governor Granholm prepares to meet with legislative leaders today in budget negotiations.

"Lansing's impotence is a wakeup call for all who care about our lakes, rivers, streams and the health of our families," said Anne Woiwode, Michigan Chapter Director of Sierra Club. "We're at the point of stripping protections for treasured resources, leaving them vulnerable to long-term damage that could ripple across generations of Michiganders.

"The fact that we are raising public awareness of our wonderful Great Lakes resources in the midst of this incredible budget impasse that will those resources vulnerable puts an even stronger exclamation point on the need for our leaders to act."

Should a government shutdown occur, Michigan's resources would essentially be left unprotected and unmonitored. The fallout likely will include:

- ❖ **Unanswered citizen complaints:** Staffing to investigate toxic pollution spills and releases would be eliminated. Companies could illegally discharge pollutants to the air or water with impunity. Manure discharges from factory farms would not be monitored.
- ❖ **Dangerous or closed beaches:** Unmonitored bacterial pollution in beach water would put children at risk, and monitoring programs that might alert the public to risks would be curtailed. Illegal sewage discharges to lakes and rivers would not be punished.
- ❖ **No monitoring of air quality.** Asthmatics, the elderly and residents near factories or power plants would be left without warning or protection.
- ❖ **Business at a standstill:** Air quality permits for businesses would not be issued, stopping construction of new manufacturing facilities and making expansion of existing plants impossible.
- ❖ **A brake on redevelopment:** New brownfield redevelopment project would cease as funding and staff are eliminated.

“Lansing needs to get this problem fixed fast,” said David Holtz, Michigan Director of Clean Water Action. “If only so they can turn their attention to an even more foreboding financial crisis – the \$1.9 billion in state revenue that will be ripped from the budget at the end of this year when the Single Business Tax expires.

“The state’s natural resources, as well as its educational foundation, human services, law enforcement and all the services that make democracy work are at risk.”

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