

# Lone Tree Council

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*(Fighting for environmental justice since 1978)*

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PETITION EFFORT SHOWS STRONG SUPPORT FOR DIOXIN CLEANUP OF MICHIGAN'S LARGEST GREAT LAKES WATERSHED**

### **Plus Community Activists Share Cleanup Hopes with trip to Washington**

The cleanup of Michigan's largest Great Lakes Watershed will bring jobs and a brighter future for Michigan's economy, and will benefit everyone who visits the Saginaw Bay Watershed and Lake Huron. An online petition is being used to gather signatures of as many of the millions of Great Lakes fans as possible – the simple message is that all of them support public participation in an open transparent process as the best way to assure a comprehensive cleanup of Dow Chemical's dioxin to restore the entire region to health.

“We believe it is the duty of elected state lawmakers to uphold the public trust and protect and restore the Great Lakes to health,” states the petition. “Our economy, our public health, and our future depend on the exercise of this solemn obligation.”

Leaders of the Lone Tree Council, along with members of the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor, Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, Clean Water Action and the League of Conservation Voters traveled to Washington D.C. on February 26<sup>th</sup> for a meeting with top officials at the United States Environmental Protection Agency after learning of Dow's request for a meeting with the agency.

“We were concerned that, as in the past, Dow Chemical was trying to slip behind closed doors to ask for a deal to avoid a cleanup of their dioxin,” Michelle Hurd-Riddick said. “So we decided to go to Washington, too, and make sure EPA knows there's more than one stakeholder in this cleanup effort.” The groups met with Assistant Administrator Susan Bodine, head of EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response and Superfund. At that meeting, Bodine confirmed the cleanup plan would not be altered. “Ms. Bodine told us that the Michigan DEQ will maintain the lead on corrective action cleanup, and EPA Region V will also be there,” said Riddick, “and that was very good to hear.”

To show there is support from the Great Lakes community for comprehensive cleanup of the dioxin in the watershed, the groups are asking Great Lakes fans to sign an online petition modeled after the position paper left with EPA, Assistant Administrator, Susan Bodine. Major community and environmental advocacy organizations have already signed on including the 70-member Michigan Environmental Council, but the groups want to show there is a larger audience.

“This is the largest watershed in the state, and the dioxin contamination is a Great Lakes Water Quality issue,” said Sierra Club's Rita Jack, “the petition is to show the public is aware, and they want their elected

officials to be vigilant, and to watchdog this whole process.”

The groups are collecting signatures on a website set up by the Ecology Center and available at <http://www.ecocenter.org/takeaction/dowpetition.php> They will deliver the signatures to legislators and the governor in the near future. “We know there is support for a cleanup, this petition gives us a way to show that,” said Lone Tree Council Chairman, Terry Miller.

Go to [www.trwnews.net](http://www.trwnews.net) to connect to the petition link

Position Paper Attached