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PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

FLOW Staff to Issue Public Statement at Governor's Energy Forum in Traverse City
Michigan's Energy Plan Needs to Bring Water to the Center of the Conversation

TRAVERSE CITY, MI – Governor Rick Snyder's "Readying Michigan to Make Good Energy Decisions" Public Forum tour makes its seventh and final stop in Traverse City on Monday April 22, 2013. FLOW, a Traverse City-based nonprofit water policy and education center, has prepared written comments and will make public statements during next week's forum that highlight the water-energy nexus as an integral part of charting Michigan's energy future plans. Once water is elevated and integrated into the energy debate, the case for prioritizing renewable energies becomes clear. FLOW is a proponent for establishing and applying principles that unify and protect the integrity of the water cycle that flows through the "nexus" between energy production, water management, and climate change.

"Michigan faces a watershed moment and opportunity to chart a new cleaner energy course that is good for jobs, good for the environment, good for energy affordability, and good for the water," says FLOW Executive Director Liz Kirkwood. Energy production, particularly of non-renewable sources, depends heavily on water for resource extraction, refining and processing, transportation, and electric power generation. The International Energy Agency projects that the amount of water consumed for energy production will double by 2035. FLOW urges Michigan energy policy-makers to wean Michigan off water-intensive energy sources, such as coal-fired power plants and hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. "The big issue with fracking is the water, both in sheer quantity (e.g., 300 million gallons to frack 13 wells in Kalkaska County) and in safe disposal of chemical-laden and often toxic wastewater that will never return to our hydrologic cycle," remarks Kirkwood.

In addition to water consumption for energy generation, climate change is a major issue to address in the water-energy nexus, according to Attorney and FLOW Chair Jim Olson. "What we want the Governor's office and our state's decision-makers to realize is that Michigan's current energy plan is much more expensive when the costs of climate change impacts on water resources are accounted for. Our dependence on fossil fuels is the leading cause of climate change—the largest diversion of water from the Great Lakes—and the principle reason for current low water levels," says Olson. Historic low water levels are costing taxpayers up to \$21 million for emergency dredging this year. Super-storms, drought, increased evaporation, heavy precipitation, and precipitously falling water levels are all strong indicators that our fossil fuel and carbon-rich lifestyle and diet is no longer sustainable to assure the integrity and health of the waters of the Great Lakes.

The bottom line is that expanding Michigan's renewable energy portfolio makes good sense because it good for jobs, good for the environment, good for energy affordability, and good for the water.

For more information:

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