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DELEG's Bureau of Energy Systems and the Michigan Municipal League Kickoff Michigan Green Communities Challenge

June 9, 2009. The Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG) and the Michigan Municipal League (League) today announce the Michigan Green Communities Challenge, a program designed to provide communities with tools to incorporate energy efficiency and conservation strategies. In a unique collaborative effort between DELEG and the League, the Challenge is a step by step process designed to ensure that all Michigan communities have the tools necessary to incorporate energy efficiency and conservation strategies.

"All Michigan communities are eligible to complete the Basic Challenge," said DELEG Director Stanley "Skip" Pruss, who also serves as the state's Chief Energy Officer. "The Basic Challenge is a commitment community leaders can make to adopt policies and programs of energy efficiency and conservation. The City of Charlevoix is the first city to pass a resolution committing to these programs."

Daniel P. Gilmartin, executive director and CEO of the League, added, "At its most basic level, the Challenge is a recognition program developed through the joint efforts of the Bureau of Energy Systems and the League and is intended to provide a roadmap for all communities—large and small—to 'go green.' Additionally, however, the Challenge is specifically designed to assist communities that apply for funds under the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program." The online Challenge is found at http://www.mml.org/resources/educenter/green_challenge.html.

Pruss said investments in energy efficiency represent a major opportunity for Michigan to create jobs, save money, and reduce the state's reliance on fossil fuels. In fact, energy efficiency creates more jobs per dollar than fuel-based solutions. By replacing traditional fossil fuel energy, Michigan's energy efficiency program will save Michigan over \$3 billion in electricity costs over the next 20 years.

Michigan stands to receive approximately \$1 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy. DELEG is responsible for deployment of these funds to support three of Governor Jennifer M. Granholm's five key priorities for investing Michigan's share of economic recovery dollars:

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- Creating new jobs to jumpstart Michigan's economy;
- Training Michigan workers and educating Michigan students for good jobs here today and new jobs created tomorrow;
- Investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies to create jobs, save money, and reduce the state's reliance on fossil fuels.

“Our priority is to align our state energy strategy with the most effective and efficient use of Recovery Act funds so that all of our work is supported,” said Pruss. “And, our energy strategy targets five main areas: workforce, advanced energy storage, energy efficiency, large scale wind, and solar.”

DELEG's Bureau of Energy Systems is specifically charged with coordinating ARRA funds in a number of energy-related programs including an expanded State Energy Program; the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG) program; and an Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program. Further details will be made available on the state's website at www.michigan.gov/recovery. The Bureau is also working with the Michigan Municipal League to prepare and assist communities in the implementation of the EECBG. See the League's website page http://www.mml.org/advocacy/federal/eecbg_info.htm. The Bureau also administers the Retired Engineer Technical Assistance Program (RETAP) that provides no-cost onsite pollution prevention and energy efficiency assessments to businesses, and Rebuild MI Program, which provides onsite energy efficiency assessments to public buildings, as well as other programs including Green Lodging Michigan, Clean Cities, Michigan Biomass Energy Program, and the Green Communities Challenge.

According to Pruss, green technology will be the single biggest economic opportunity of the 21st century. “We're working to turn Michigan into the leading green state in the nation, training our citizens and community leaders to do the work needed to grow these emerging industries,” he said.

The Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG) is investing in Michigan's future by preparing for the new energy economy, helping to create the jobs of today and tomorrow, ensuring that our children and adults have the skills these jobs demand, making Michigan a better place to do business, and training and placing those who need jobs now.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/deleg, the Bureau of Energy Systems' website at <http://www.michigan.gov/energyoffice> and the Michigan Municipal League's website at www.mml.org. Communities can take the Challenge at http://www.mml.org/resources/educenter/green_challenge.html. The League's contact is Sue Jeffers, sjeffers@mml.org.

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