

March 18, 2024

Phil Roos
Director
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
525 West Allegan Street
Lansing, MI 48933

Subject: Center for EmPowering Communities Support the State of Michigan's CPRG Implementation Grant General Competition Application, (Award Number EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07)

Dear Director Roos,

We, the Center for EmPowering Communities at the Graham Sustainability Institute, affirm our partnership with the State of Michigan and the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) in response to EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07. We are pleased to endorse Michigan's objective to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and ambitiously site renewable energy in Michigan through the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. Under EGLE's proposed Renewables Ready Communities Program, the Renewables Ready Communities Awards and the Brownfield Renewable Energy Pilot Program will unlock significant GHG emissions in the near term, provide substantial community benefits in low-income and disadvantaged communities, and improve capacity and technical expertise in renewable energy siting statewide.

Through the CPRG grant program period, we anticipate collaborating with the State to develop technical assistance and trainings for EGLE's Renewable Energy Academy, especially as it relates to zoning, permitting, and siting renewable energy in majority low-income and disadvantaged communities. The Center for EmPowering Communities is particularly interested in developing a training for local and state government staff to learn more about community benefits agreements negotiation. We anticipate other technical assistance materials related to use of tax revenue funds from the development of projects and financial rewards projection of hosting renewable energy projects. We will also assist in developing materials for renewable energy projects on brownfields. This collaboration is an extension of ongoing work between EGLE and the Center for EmPowering Communities, which includes developing and delivering technical assistance on these topics to communities across the urban-rural spectrum.

Given the State's proven success in implementing equitable climate policies, we have full confidence in their ability to achieve the objectives laid out in the application. Furthermore, this initiative will stimulate increased investment in renewable energy projects critical to achieving the State's climate objectives.

Our organization's mission is to integrate leading-edge social science research with community engagement and policymaking to foster decarbonization solutions that advance community goals. We have been honored to partner with EGLE for the last five years to conceptualize, develop, and implement the Renewable Energy Academy, which has provided a touchpoint to each of Michigan's 1,350 local zoning jurisdictions responsible for planning and policymaking for renewable energy.

We are enthusiastic about partnering with the State of Michigan to advance the goals of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through this pivotal program.

Sincerely,



Sarah Mills, PhD
Director, Center for EmPowering Communities
Associate Professor of Practice, Urban and Regional Planning Program