



## **Press Release – For Immediate Release**

Statewide Commissioners Eliot Bates, Katie Chiang, Madeleine Findley, and Priya Naik

### **Commissioners Welcome Opportunity to Enhance Michigan Urban Core**

The state of Michigan has unparalleled opportunities for economic development, rich natural resources, and a strong higher education system. We welcome this opportunity to enhance the state by investing in recreational and community development in its largest city. The City of Detroit has a strong international profile, in some cases exceeding that even of Michigan. Benefiting Detroit will benefit Michigan as a whole.

Michigan needs to attract businesses and young professionals, including recent university graduates and young families, to Detroit and other communities in the state. Michigan is 47<sup>th</sup> in the country in retaining its 25-34 year-old population. Population flight from Detroit has been a chronic problem for 50 years, and the city is especially losing young adults. This creative, entrepreneurial and diverse group of people seeks exciting cities with open space and dynamic community growth. From 2000 to 2002, metro Detroit lost 33,000 adults between the ages of 25 and 34, more than any other major city in the country. The state must work to reverse this trend, which hurts the state's long-term economic outlook.

Urban revitalization helps address the negative effects of suburban sprawl. It is important that Michigan shift its development priorities to its long-neglected cities. The tremendous cost of building and maintaining road infrastructure burdens governments at all levels. It is more economically rational to take advantage of the existing road infrastructure in Detroit and the state's other cities. In addition, Detroit was recently named as the most obese city in the nation, contributing greatly to Michigan's spending on health care. Reducing sprawl and developing more "walk-able" communities will improve the state's public health and lower spiraling rates of obesity. In particular, outdoor recreation opportunities are critical to developing and maintaining a healthy population. Finally, creating safe, clean and open spaces improves a community's quality of life.

Rampant sprawl has also contributed to high economic and racial segregation. Segregation between the declining urban core and Detroit's prospering suburbs contributes gravely to the city and the state's image. Michigan must start bridging the racial and economic divide to draw more residents and businesses to Detroit. A successful urban revitalization project brings together different populations and increases opportunities for greater social mingling.

Urban revitalization increases property values and property tax revenues. A greater tax base will provide greater resources for school infrastructure and educational improvements in Detroit. Urban renewal projects also spur powerful development in adjacent areas. These benefits include improvements in housing in adjacent areas and attraction of businesses and employment opportunities. Lastly, preserving Detroit's historic, cultural and natural resources will result in increased revenue from tourism, Michigan's second largest industry.