



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
LANSING



LIESL EICHLER CLARK
DIRECTOR

June 29, 2021

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Mr. David Kepler, President
Four Lakes Task Force
233 East Larkin Street, Suite 2
Midland, Michigan 48640

Dear Mr. Kepler:

Thank you for your active engagement with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) as we work together to recover from the impacts created by the Edenville and Sanford Dams failures. EGLE appreciates the work being completed by the Four Lakes Task Force. We will remain actively engaged in this effort until a full recovery is achieved.

As you are aware, I have been able to visit Midland and Gladwin Counties multiple times since the dams failed on May 19, 2020. My first visit was just a few days after the failures. The widespread devastation to homes, businesses, and the landscape was heartbreaking. My most recent visit was in May 2021, and although only one year had passed since the flooding, the repaired buildings, restored roadways, and reopened businesses illustrated the strength and determination of area residents and community leaders. EGLE is proud to stand alongside this diverse community of partners.

Your April 20, 2021, letter outlined several important decisions that the Four Lakes Task Force is facing regarding the next steps of recovery along the river, including whether the failed dams should be rebuilt. While EGLE must honor its regulatory oversight role related to this prospective decision, EGLE will support the Midland and Gladwin Counties' communities if they decide the best course of action is to rebuild the dams and restore the lakes. As you are aware, Michigan law lays out the criteria and process EGLE must follow in making appropriate permitting decisions. EGLE commits to working closely with the Four Lakes Task Force throughout this process and making all permitting decisions in a timely manner.

There were other regulatory and procedural issues that you outlined in your April letter. I am routinely being briefed by the EGLE team working with the Four Lakes Task Force to resolve these issues. I am pleased with the progress that is being reported to me. While some issues are complex and may take time and creativity to resolve, I am confident we are on the right track.

Mr. David Kepler

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I also appreciate your suggestion that we consider establishing a results-based framework for decision-making associated with these issues. EGLE has been advised by counsel that entering into an agreement as you outlined is not appropriate at this time because, as required by state law, many of the decisions that underlie these topics will need to be completed in the context of submitted permit applications, which are typically subject to public review and input. This constraint does not prevent us from honoring the spirit of your request and using your proposed framework as a starting point for our teams to consider as they engage on these important issues.

Thank you again for your continued leadership in moving Midland and Gladwin Counties forward. Supporting that progress will remain a top priority for EGLE until restoration is complete. I look forward to our ongoing collaboration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Liesl Eichler Clark", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liesl Eichler Clark
Director
517-284-6700

cc: Senator Jim Stamas
Mr. Aaron B. Keatley, Chief Deputy Director, EGLE
Mr. Travis Boeskool, Legislative Liaison, EGLE
Ms. Teresa Seidel, EGLE
Mr. Jerrod Sanders, EGLE