

**PETE HOEKSTRA**

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MICHIGAN

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110th Congress

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEES:

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RANKING MEMBER

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND LABOR

October 23, 2007

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
Governor  
The State of Michigan  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Granholm:

In light of the fiscal crisis in which our state currently finds itself, and particularly after the massive tax increase adopted to fund state government, I am disturbed by the Michigan Department of Transportation choosing to spend \$318,000 in taxpayer dollars for construction of a 4-foot-tall fence to protect turtles.

The fence will run along a stretch of highway that lies in the congressional district I represent, and despite my being aware of the remedy the fence seeks to provide, I am alarmed at the lack of prioritization demonstrated by this allocation of funding.

It is not the concept of the project, rather it is the message sent by the state that concerns me. By passing a massive tax increase, I believe that Lansing has asked the citizens of Michigan to sacrifice without first holding itself accountable and challenging itself to exercise some degree of creativity with the state's budget. By spending \$318,000 dollars on a fence to protect turtles, the citizens have effectively been told that Lansing is indifferent to their sacrifice.

At a time of such limited resources, I believe that MDOT should prioritize the allocation of federal dollars on projects that impact the movement of people or commercial products, rather than spend money on projects that make sense when times are good.

Thus, I am writing to request that you convene a working group to study how the State can better allocate funds from its budget. I am willing to volunteer my time and effort to help determine how to more effectively spend federal dollars coming into the state, and I believe others would be prepared to do the same.

As you know, approximately one-third of Michigan's budget comes from federal funding. Yet, at no time have I nor any of my federal counterparts – to my knowledge – been approached about providing greater flexibility with the allocation of federal dollars. Cooperation amongst all parties who care about Michigan is critical in a state whose unemployment rate is 63 percent above the national average.

I have begun exploring options available – including introducing legislation – to provide states in dire straits, like Michigan, with the flexibility to help residents and businesses rebound. In fact, I fully



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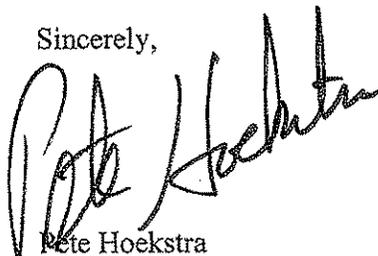


support relaxing the restrictions placed on federal funds if Lansing bureaucrats would demonstrate some sensibility in prioritizing the state's fiscal situation.

We must examine every opportunity to determine how we can help the Michigan economy bounce back.

I look forward to your response and cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Hoekstra". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Pete Hoekstra  
Member of Congress