



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DR. TIM BORING
DIRECTOR

May 18, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

The Office of Rural Development, housed in the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, works closely with small towns and rural communities across Michigan in order to align and coordinate investment, ensure a rural “voice” in policy development and decision-making, and act as a partner for communities working toward local and regional solutions, investment, and development that will foster long-term local prosperity.

For decades, rural Michigan has experienced a confluence of unique challenges tied closely to global trends and changing demographics that have impacted our communities’ workforce and economies. As communities look for opportunities to rebuild and grow their populations and economies, the Office is dedicated to supporting processes and activities that create economic opportunities, preserve local identity, and protect our local way of life. Local planning processes are fundamental to these goals: the Office understands that successful rural communities invest in thorough planning processes that allow the community to ensure that change is managed in a way that preserves and enhances local and regional assets.

As you know, the Michigan Manufacturing and Innovation Campus (MMIC) is a singularly unique opportunity to utilize land currently owned by Michigan State University (MSU) to attract a domestic company and create numerous good-paying jobs in mid-Michigan. In addition to the creation of new jobs, we understand that four endowments within MSU’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources would receive 55% of the proceeds from any land sale, benefitting agricultural research, education, and outreach in perpetuity, and supporting the 10 million acres of land currently under cultivation across the state.

As Michigan’s economy adjusts to new economic trends, and as rural communities across the state face declining and aging populations, diverse economic opportunities are critical to building sustainable economies and communities. Advanced manufacturing investment creates opportunities to complement existing economic assets and spur sustainable growth. Planning processes keep the community in the ‘driver’s seat,’ and can ensure that the region’s rural way of life is enhanced by economic development efforts that bring investments and jobs that allow families to remain and thrive in rural communities. As Eagle Township and Clinton County consider restarting the planning process around this significant potential investment, the Office of Rural Development looks forward to opportunities to work with you to towards sustainable growth and revitalization in our state’s rural communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sarah Lucas".

Sarah Lucas, AICP
Director, MDARD Office of Rural Development