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## Deception Unmasked

### Campaign Finance Records Prove that Homebuilding Industry Was Real Opponent of County Proposal 1

Campaign finance filings obtained yesterday from the Washtenaw County Bureau of Elections document that the homebuilding industry bankrolled the opposition to Washtenaw County Ballot Proposal 1, the Comprehensive Land Preservation Initiative. During the election campaign, the opponents, organized under a ballot committee entitled "Washtenaw Citizens for Responsible Growth," had claimed a broad membership of "businesses, unions, farmers, and citizens," and had downplayed the builders' role in their group.

"Voters were misled by the builders' well-funded campaign into thinking that Proposal 1 was opposed by a broad cross-section of county organizations and individuals," said Mike Garfield, Director of the Ecology Center. "In fact, their 'coalition' was organized by builders, funded by builders, and existed for the service of builders."

WCRG listed \$337,495 in donations from 178 businesses, organizations, and individuals. Approximately 98% of the donations were made by individuals or organizations directly related to the homebuilding industry. All large donations were made by homebuilding industry interests, with the exception of one \$1,000 contribution by retired industrialist Charles Gelman. The campaign also nearly doubled the previous spending record for Washtenaw County ballot initiatives. The previous high was \$171,040 by the opponents of a 1988 rent control initiative in Ann Arbor.

"The homebuilders misled the public about their campaign spending just like they misled the public about the Proposal itself," said Mike Sklar, co-chair of the Huron Valley Group of the Sierra Club. "They held back half their donations until after the last pre-election filing deadline in order to hide the fact that theirs was a big-money campaign to protect the selfish interests of those who profit from unchecked suburban sprawl."

In contrast, the supporters of Proposal 1 raised funds from 669 individuals and organizations. The "Yes on Proposal 1" campaign was supported by two ballot committees which spent a total of \$208,381. Save Our Land - Save Our Future (SOLSOF) spent \$159,106, in funds from 631 donors, including \$21,500 from the second ballot committee, Farmers for Farmland Preservation (FFP). FFP spent an additional \$49,275, which was raised from 38 donors.

A list of the top donors to each campaign follows.

The EC is a 28-year-old Ann Arbor-based regional environmental organization which works for clean air, safe water, and healthy communities in southeast Michigan. The Huron Valley Group is the Washtenaw area branch of the Sierra Club, the country's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization.