



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 25, 2019

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40+ Non-Profit Organizations collaborate on Michigan Climate Solutions Conference

43 local, statewide, and national organizations, known as Drawdown Allies, banded together to produce a conference on climate change solutions on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids. [Rise Up & Drawdown Michigan](#), the full day conference was the first of its kind in Michigan to focus on community, collaboration, solutions, and action. The conference provided accessibility to a wide audience, including equitably-priced tickets, interpretation for Spanish-speaking and deaf/hard of hearing community members.

[Paul Hawken](#), creator of the New York Times Bestseller *Drawdown, the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming*, world-renowned environmentalist, entrepreneur, author and activist keyed the conference. Drawdown Allies collaborated for one common purpose: to create action in our community towards the reversal of human induced climate change.

“Climate change is happening all around us,” stated Cheri Holman, Executive Director of U.S. Green Building Council of West Michigan and lead organizer of the Rise Up & Drawdown Michigan conference, “climate change is no longer a future problem or distant prediction. It is right here, right now. Local action must step up where federal leadership is absent and with our 10 largest cities emitting nearly 20 million metric tons of carbon per year, we cannot wait any longer to act.”

“For too long many of us have believed that the most important way to address the climate crisis depended on top-down leadership and action,” emphasized Paul Hawken “Rise Up and Drawdown Michigan was a brilliant expression of a true path to climate leadership and transformation, solutions coming from the middle out, from community, schools, neighbors, mayors, business, and our children. The conference was a powerful demonstration that solving the climate crisis originates on a local and regional basis, where people are connected, caring, and collaborative.”

The premier event hosted speakers such as Mayor Rosalynn Bliss of The City of Grand Rapids, Dr. Brandy Brown, Climate and Energy Advisor for the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, and Frank Ettawageshik, the Executive Director of United Tribes of Michigan. In addition, 6 breakout sessions



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were offered with a myriad of topics including transportation, food waste, community energy solutions, land development and more.

"The Rise Up & Drawdown Michigan conference was an incredible opportunity to come together as a community to learn more about what we can do individually and collectively to reverse climate change. It also provided a great platform for the City to highlight some of the important work we are doing related to environmental sustainability." said Mayor Rosalynn Bliss.

More than 40 students from a myriad of schools including Grand Rapids Public Schools, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Whitehall Public Schools, Grand Rapids Community College and Aquinas College took the main stage urging immediate action on our climate crisis. The powerful and emotional display brought tears to the at full capacity room of 500 civic, business and community members, including former Mayor George Heartwell, Mary Judnich of Senator Stabenow's office and Peter Dickow of Senator Peters office.

Solutions for climate change actions were offered with total cost, return on investment and the corresponding reduction of atmospheric carbon. A few of the top solutions include an immediate transition to clean energy, carbon-free mass transit, walkable cities, net zero building operation and food waste reduction.

Drawdown Steering Committee

- Cheri Holman, U.S. Green Building Council of West Michigan
- Ana Jose, West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Yumiko Jakobcic, Grand Valley State University
- Sergio Cira-Reyes, Urban Core Collective
- Alison Waske Sutter, City of Grand Rapids
- Aaron Ferguson, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
- Bill Wood, West Michigan Environmental Action Council
- Carissa Patrone, West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum
- Lisa Oliver-King, Our Kitchen Table
- Anne Marie Hertl, Michigan League of Conservation Voters
- Guy Williams, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice

Drawdown Allies

- 3R Environmental Education
- AIA Grand Rapids
- American Sustainable Business Council
- Ann Arbor 2030 District
- BIFMA
- City of Grand Rapids
- Citizens' Climate Lobby
- Climate Witness Project
- Comprenew
- Detroit 2030 District
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
- Eco-Works
- Good For Michigan
- Grand Rapids 2030 District
- Grand Valley State University, Office of Sustainability
- Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition
- GreenHome Institute
- Green Michigan
- Habitat for Humanity of Kent County



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- Hispanic Center of Western Michigan
- International Living Future Institute
- Lansing Environmental Action Team
- Michigan Battle of the Buildings
- Michigan Energy Options
- Michigan Interfaith Power & Light
- Michigan League of Conservation Voters
- Michigan Mosaic Energy Cooperative
- Michigan Saves
- NextEnergy
- Sierra Club Michigan Chapter
- Small Business Association of Michigan
- Sunrise Movement
- Urban Roots
- U.S. Green Building Council Detroit
- U.S. Green Building Council of West Michigan
- West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- West Michigan Environmental Action Council
- West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum

Drawdown Supporters

- Wege Foundation
- Consumers Energy
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy
- Steelcase
- SMG/DeVos Place
- Boxed Water
- DNV-GL
- Books & Mortar
- Padnos
- Founders Brewing

About the U.S. Green Building Council of West Michigan

The U.S. Green Building Council of West Michigan works to transform the way buildings and communities that are designed, built and operated, that improves the quality of life in Michigan. We do this through education and programs such as the Michigan Battle of the Buildings, the Grand Rapids 2030 District, and the Energy Assistance Program.

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