

**Press Statement
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**AG tortures law in opinion aiming to block Michigan's progress toward clean energy jobs;
Cox opposes legislature's intent to provide "feasible and prudent" analysis of state's energy
options**

A new era of clean energy jobs and economic development in Michigan has been needlessly delayed by Attorney General Mike Cox's tortured interpretation of state laws regarding public health and the environment, according to the Michigan Environmental Council and the Sierra Club's Michigan Chapter.

In an opinion released last week, Cox echoes the position of the state's coal lobby. They, and Cox, contend that it is illegal for Gov. Jennifer Granholm to require the most "feasible and prudent" energy technologies power Michigan's future. The opinion attempts to block a transition from expensive, dirty coal-fired power to cheaper energy efficiency and cleaner renewable energy.

The losers, if Cox and the coal interests prevail, will be Michigan families who will continue to pay billions each year for out-of-state coal imports rather than creating Michigan jobs for manufacturers and installers of energy efficiency products and renewable energy components like wind turbines.

"The governor's recent executive directive requires that proposed coal plants compete – on cost and on protection of public health and the environment – against other alternatives like efficiency programs and renewable power," said **Anne Woiwode** of the Sierra Club. "Since coal plants won't win in a competitive marketplace, their backers are desperate to maintain the near-monopoly they've enjoyed for more than a century."

Cox's opinion takes the position that Granholm overstepped her authority by requiring coal power plant developers to consider other methods to meet electricity demand.

But the plain language of energy laws passed by the state legislature last fall makes clear the intent of the state's energy policy to require thorough analysis of alternatives to coal by public utilities. Granholm's directive applies the same standard to all electric providers.

"We believe the governor's directive is entirely consistent with both the legislation passed last fall, and all environmental laws," said **James Clift** of the Michigan Environmental Council. "As

a state, we need to move forward toward considering renewable energy and efficiency programs, not stand still with century old coal technology.”