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## **BUSINESS LEADERS FOR MICHIGAN REPORT SHOWS MICHIGAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE COLLABORATING, MORE CAN BE DONE**

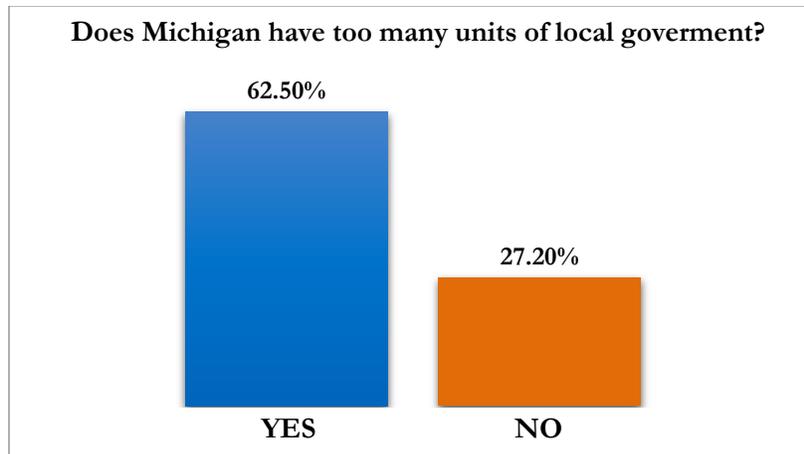
**LANSING, Mich., November 12, 2013** — Regional leaders in Michigan have been pursuing collaboration for some time and will have more opportunities to enhance collaboration in the years ahead, according to a report released today by Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM) looking at local government collaboration efforts in Michigan.

“More than two-thirds of Michigan voters support providing more funding to units of government that work together by merging services and prioritizing state funding to regions of the state that show they can work together,” said Doug Rothwell, BLM President & CEO. “Efforts implemented by the Governor and Legislature over the last few years, such as the Economic Vitality Incentive Program and the Regional Prosperity Initiative recognize the need to incentivize collaboration.”

Key findings of the *Business Leaders' Insights: Local Government Collaboration in Michigan* report:

- Local governments in Michigan are pursuing collaboration as a way to spur economic development and to address the competing pressures of lower revenues and increasing costs
- Regional collaboration is already underway between many local governments in Michigan with benefits ranging from improved marketing and promotion of regional assets to significant cost savings
- New laws designed to make collaboration even more attractive haven't been in place long enough to know whether they will accelerate collaboration, but public support for increased collaboration is strong

The BLM study also shows that while there are opportunities for more collaboration, challenges remain. “Even as voters believe, by a 2 to 1 margin, that Michigan has too many units of local government, most attempts to consolidate local units of government in Michigan have not been successful,” said Rothwell. “Just last week, the voters in Saugatuck and Douglas defeated a proposal to merge their governments, despite studies showing it could save tax dollars.”



A statewide poll of 600 registered voters conducted by the Glengariff Group, Inc. in June 2013.

Regional leaders surveyed for the report provided multiple examples of collaboration taking place across the state. For example, in Southwest Michigan, the counties of Allegan, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren collaborated on an economic development vision for the region called the Transformation Agenda for Southwest Michigan. So far, the plan has resulted in 16,282 new and direct jobs and \$31,796,000 in new capital in the region. In Detroit, a regional authority consisting of representatives from Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties, as well as the State of Michigan and the City of Detroit, was established to oversee operations of the Cobo Center. So far, the authority has reduced operating costs by nearly \$6 million annually and energy costs by almost 45 percent while more than doubling operating revenues from \$3.6 million to \$7.6 million.

Rothwell remarked that increased regional service sharing is a priority of BLM’s Michigan Turnaround Plan to make Michigan a Top Ten State for job, economic and personal income growth, “The good news is that our regional local government and private sector leaders are already thinking of and implementing innovative ways to leverage regional economic assets and to deliver services more effectively and efficiently. Recent changes to state law provide our regional leaders with the tools to pursue even greater collaboration, and we hope leaders will take advantage of them.”

*Business Leaders’ Insights: Local Government Collaboration in Michigan*, was developed from statewide surveys and polls, government data sources, and analysis of research compiled by non-government sources. Find the full report at: <http://www.businessleadersformichigan.com/research-data/>

### **About Business Leaders for Michigan:**

Business Leaders for Michigan ([www.BusinessLeadersforMichigan.com](http://www.BusinessLeadersforMichigan.com)) is a private, non-profit executive leadership organization dedicated to making Michigan a “Top Ten” state for job and economic growth. The organization is composed exclusively of the chairpersons, chief executives or most senior executives of Michigan’s largest companies and universities, which provide over 325,000 jobs in Michigan, generate over \$1 Trillion in annual revenue and serve over 135,000 students. The organization’s work is defined by the Michigan Turnaround Plan, a holistic, fact-based strategy to get Michigan’s economy back on track. Visit [www.michiganturnaroundplan.com](http://www.michiganturnaroundplan.com) for more information.