



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PROTEC Celebrates 30 Years of Defending
Michigan's Local Control and Public Rights-of-Way**

Detroit, Michigan - The Michigan Coalition to Protect Public Rights-Of-Way (PROTEC) is proud to announce its 30th Anniversary, marking three decades of specialized legal and technical advocacy for Michigan's local governments. Founded in 1996 to counter the unregulated incursion of telecommunications companies into public land, PROTEC has grown into a powerful consortium of over 100 member municipalities.

Since its inception, PROTEC has served as the "legal engine" for its partners at the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and the Michigan Townships Association (MTA). Its first hallmark battle was the negotiation of the METRO Act, which transformed a proposed "free-for-all" for providers into a structured system that currently generates \$30 million annually for Michigan communities to maintain their streets and infrastructure and PROTEC seeks to increase that revenue.

"For 30 years, our mission has been simple: your streets belong to your residents, not foreign corporate boards and their bottom lines," said Michael J. Watza, General Counsel for PROTEC. "As technology evolves from copper lines to fiber and 5G Rights-of-Way (ROW) small cells and beyond, PROTEC remains the primary shield against state and federal attempts to strip local leaders of their zoning and safety authority."

A key focus of this milestone year is securing \$2.4 billion in a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) formed trust from EschoStar for Municipal and other landlord claimants and the continued defense of Michigan's Public Act 480 (The Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act). In collaboration with the Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) and the Michigan Community Media Association (MICMA), PROTEC is actively fighting the streaming industry to preserve the franchise and PEG (Public, Educational, and Government) fees that fund local transparency and community media.

PROTEC is a consortium of more than 100 Michigan municipalities focused on protecting the public rights-of-way and the intersection with the many utilities occupying and seeking access to occupy and utilize the municipal public rights-of-way.

PROTEC's Municipal Board consists of its founding members; Dearborn, Livonia, and Southfield. Michael J. Watza and the law firm of Bloom Sluggett, PC serves as its General Counsel.

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