Annual Report
January–December 2025

Report prepared by Marjorie Steele on 1.27.26

EDRA of MI

A 501(c)4 organization formed in June of 2023 in order to:

- fight toxic, taxpayer-funded heavy industrial development,
- lobby on behalf of grassroots communities for economic and environmental justice,
- model community-based economic development in disinvested communities

Little organization, big impact

In May, we sent a letter of demand to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) insisting that Gotion's SOAR grant contracts be called into default on the grounds of: 1) abandonment, 2) material adverse effects of Gotion's lawsuit against GCT, and 3) loss of local support.

In October, the MEDC called Gotion's SOAR grants into default on those very same grounds.

In December, Lansing legislators excluded all SOAR funding from the 2026 budget.

"I mean...you changed policy."

- a prominent state journalist

A Snapshot of 2025

- 11 grassroots action campaigns
- 6 exclusive news reports
- 12 regulatory & legislative lobbying campaigns
- 4 toolkits for grassroots organizers
- 3 free community events
- 25 new communities represented
- 46 total articles published

Notable campaigns

Gotion EV megasite (Big Rapids)
Holding the developer acccountable for the terms of their state grant contracts.
AMD chip megasite (Mundy Twp)
Facilitating citizen watchdogs in prompting environmental & regulatory compliance.
Protect the Porkies (Gogebic County)
Exclusive journalism, media, & supported grassroots action campaigns.
MI Potash Co. (Evart)
Supported MI Citizens for Water Conservation in research & grassroots action on environmental permitting.
Project Stargate (Saline)
Supported local grassroots in research on environmental & utility permitting
Utility wind/solar/BESS (statewide)
Published actionable resources for local organizers; participated in EGLE policy public input sessions.
AI data centers (statewide)
Published webpages & toolkits for local community organizers.
MEDC (statewide)
Lobbied legislators to dismantle the MEDC.

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Grassroots action campaigns

These are areas where we put in the time on research, writing, and boots-on-the-ground action with regulators, media, and the public to hold developers accountable for their impacts.

December ‘24– EGLE public input hearing on MI Potash wetlands permits

December ‘24–EGLE public input session: Decarbonize homes and businesses

January ‘25–EGLE public input session: Protecting Michigan’s land and water

January ‘25–EGLE public input hearing on MI Potash air permits–January

January ‘25–EGLE public input session: Driving clean innovation in industry

April ‘25–Mundy megasite developer receives EGLE wetlands violations

May ‘25–Uncovering the Mundy megasite HOA takeover

July ‘25–EGLE public input hearing for Marshall megasite’s air permits

September ‘25–Supported Protect the Porkies rally at the Capitol

December ‘25–MPSC review of DTE utility permits for Saline’s 1.4GW data center

December ‘25– EGLE public input hearings on Saline data center wetland permits

December ‘25–Joined statewide grassroots organizers against AI data centers in Lansing.

Regulatory & legislative action campaigns

We were busy during December of 2024's lame duck session, lobbying legislators for better safeguards on local zoning, environmental accountability for developers, and against corporate subsidies–including AI data centers.

We've continued to educate and inform state legislators on key issues, and to work with them towards solutions whenever possible–as we did with Gotion's state grant contracts.

December '24–Lame duck lobbying for:
- water affordability
- polluter pay
- environmental rulemaking authority
- stormwater management utilities

and against:
- SOAR funding & corporate subsidies
- $50M funding for the Copperwood Mine
- data center tax breaks
- sand and gravel mining local control

February '25–Lobbying against destroying 4,000 acres of state forest near Gaylord for utility solar

March '25–Lobbying for legislators to shut down the MEDC and its corporate welfare

May '25–Demand letter to MEDC to call Gotion's SOAR grants into default

June '25–Follow up demand letter to MEDC's response

Ongoing since fall '24–Lobbying against state funding for the Copperwood Mine

Exclusive journalism & media highlights:

In between press releases and demand letters, we were able to scoop some exclusive stories of our own. Here are out top stories from the year:

Februrary '25–Summarized T. Hughes ethics allegations against MEDC officials

August '25–Scrutinized lack of due diligence with developers slated to replace Gotion

September '25–Summarizing the grassroots fight against AI data centers

September '25–Inside reporting on the Hyundai megasite in collaboration with GA grassroots allies

September '25–Follow up reporting on an opaque think tank, TPRG, which features prominently in T. Hughes' research

New communities

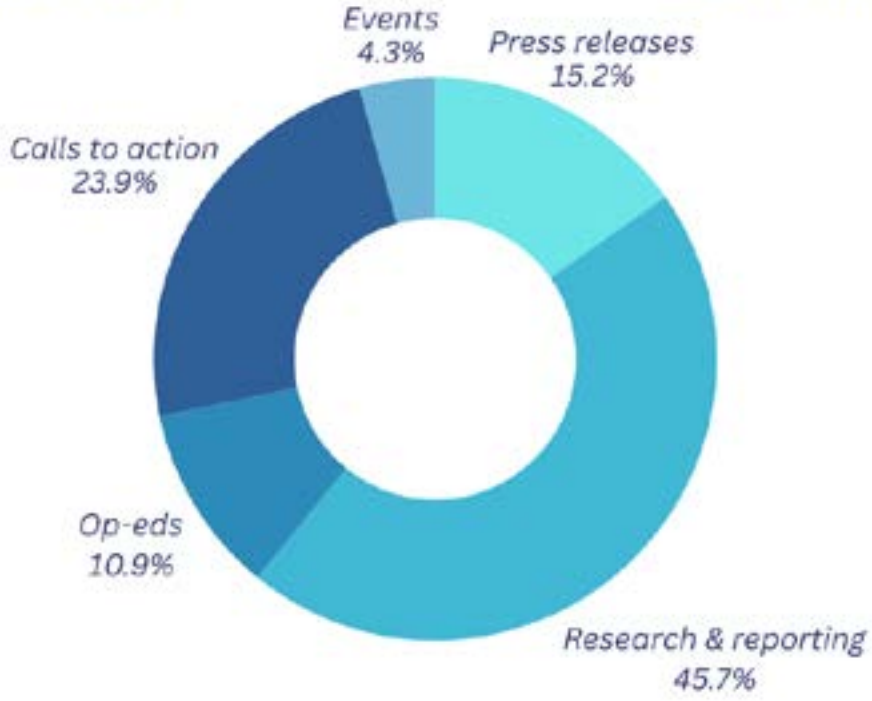
We developed web pages and research for 25 additional local Michigan communities this year; Grayling (SAAB) and 24 AI data centers. We also connected with dozens of communities fighting wind/solar/BESS.

Toolkits, guides, & resources:

- Community Action Checklist for Fighting Wind/Solar/BESS
- Strategy Guide for Fighting Wind/Solar/BESS
- Community Action Checklist & Strategy Guide for Fighting AI Data Centers
- Template & Tools for Lobbying Against AI Data Centers in Michigan
- Webpages for: AI data centers, wind/solar/BESS, 24+ individual data center communities

POSTS PUBLISHED

Total: 46 posts **avg. ~1 per week**



What happened with Gotion?

In May 2025, we asked the MEDC to call Gotion's $715M SOAR grant contracts into default, on the grounds of:

1. Project abandonment
2. Material adverse effects of Gotion's lawsuit against GCT, and
3. Loss of local support

among several others.

In October 2025, the MEDC called Gotion's SOAR grants into default, on those same three criteria.

Gotion created material adverse effects by suing Green Charter Township for breach of contract in 2024.

Loss of local support happened when the local community recalled all of GCT's board members, several Big Rapids Township board members, and flipped three county seats. Mecosta County Board revoked its motion to support Gotion in early 2025.

Abandonment became an issue when Gotion stopped all progress on the project in May 2024. After we placed heavy scrutiny on the site's flood plain and environmental impacts, Gotion rescinded their Site Plan Application to the county, and they never filed their EGLE environmental permit applications.

Impact of our work

Indirect:
Proud supporters of Protect the Porkies' victory in stopping taxpayer subsidies for the Copperwood Mine (FOR NOW).

EGLE heightens its requirements on MI Potash's wetlands permits.

MI Attorney General cracks down on embezzlement of MEDC officials.

Michigan communities lead the nation in fighting back against AI data centers.

Direct:
House Oversight Subcommittee on Corporate Subsidies & State Investments includes the Mundy AMD megasite in its investigations, at our recommendation.

Media coverage of the Mundy megasite developer's EGLE wetlands violations.

MEDC calls Gotion's SOAR grant contracts into default.

House & Senate introducing competing legislature to "dismantle the MEDC", SOAR and other corporate subsidies fall under scrutiny.

SOAR funding is excluded by legislators from Michigan's State 2026 budget.

Provided three free local community events for 2,000 attendees, modeling grassroots economic development and revitalizing local parks spaces.

What we want to do next

Internal goals
1) Purchase necessary technology upgrades (website, laptop, phones)
2) Publish an activity book about Michigan's water and ecosystems (& plan other titles)
3) Up merch game with art collaborations & yard signage

Lobbying goals
1) Repeal 2024 data center tax breaks
2) Repeal 2023 PA233 laws
3) Develop new economic development policy focused on regenerative ag
4) Develop new climate policy, also based on regenerative ag

Organizational goals
1) Coalition building–build a bridge between Michigan's AI data center and wind/solar/BESS grassroots communities.
2) Event planning–host statewide conferences for grassroots organizers.

Learn more: edraofmi.org
Email: contact@edraofmi.org
Join the conversation on Facebook

How can you help?

1) **Donate** money (for tech, travel, and event planning) at: edraofmi.org/donate

2) **Volunteer** skills:
- graphic design
- writing op-eds
- investigative research
- making lobbying calls
- event planning

3) **Learn** about & share our model for the Regenerative Agriculture Megasite

4) **Organize** free local events in your community–take charge of your local arts & culture!

5) **Tell your legislators** about these issues–and about your support for an economic development and climate policy based on regenerative agriculture.