

## EAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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May 7, 2019

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor of the State of Michigan  
P. O. Box 30013  
Lansing, MI 8909

RE: Letter of Support for the Caro Center

The East Michigan Council of Governments writes today to convey its strong support for the retention of the Caro Center in Caro, Michigan, Tuscola County, Michigan.

This facility is a critical piece of economic infrastructure for Tuscola County and has for over 100 years been treating Michiganders with serious medical conditions ranging from patients with epilepsy beginning in 1914 and then shifting to patients with psychiatric disorders in the 1950's. The facility is the second largest employer in the County and employs an estimated 350 professionals. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the staff live within the Caro zip code with the balance dispersed throughout the east central and the southeast regions of Michigan.

While most staff are from the Tuscola County area, the fact is that many reside in areas as far north as Arenac County; west into Clare and Gladwin Counties; south into Saginaw, Genesee, Lapeer, Macomb, St. Clare, and east into Huron and Sanilac Counties. These factors reflect the vast nature of the Center's multi-county, multi-regional economic impacts. Loss of this facility will result in potentially disastrous economic disruption to Tuscola County, it's residents, employees of the Center and its regional neighbors.

As the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration's Federal Economic Development District covering 14 counties, including the Thumb, EMCOG works closely with the majority of economic development professionals in all of the above referenced counties. Every five (5) years EMCOG prepares the "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy" for our federal host, the Region and its constituents. This report documents the economic condition, achievements and trends occurring within the 14 counties of east central Michigan. Repeatedly it has shown that the strength of the region is the collective effort to move forward local units of government resiliency, quality of life, sustainable economic capacity and development opportunities. This includes provision of services to our most vulnerable citizens.

EMCOG urges your office as well as the Legislature to reconsider the decision to delay construction of the proposed new facility for the Caro Center.

Sincerely,

William R. Mrdeza  
EMCOG Chairperson

cc: Steve Erickson, Director, Tuscola County EDC  
Michael Hoagland, Controller, Tuscola County  
The Honorable Representative Phil Green  
The Honorable Senator Kevin Daley  
Dylan Hellus, Governor's Office