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## **Ministers Urge Michigan State Senate to Immediately Pass Copper Theft Legislation**

***Detroit, MI*** – The Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD) called upon members of the Michigan State Senate to promptly pass legislation that will crack down on the growing epidemic of copper theft crimes in Detroit and other areas of Michigan.

With the economic downturn, copper theft has been a growing problem in many communities across Michigan. In Detroit, the copper theft crisis has been especially severe. According to Reverend Dr. Cecelia Green Bar, pastor of Trinity AME Church in Detroit, copper is stolen on a daily basis from homes, businesses, churches and utility companies across the City of Detroit.

“Copper theft has caused safety threats in our neighborhoods and chaos on our streets,” said Reverend Green Bar. As a result of this assault on society, people cannot call 911 in emergencies, the elderly are losing their air conditioning during life threatening heat indexes, food pantries are dealing with spoiled food when refrigeration units fail and businesses are seeing their entire operations shut down – and when people resort to melting down statues of the Virgin Mary and Jesus to make a quick buck, you know this is a serious issue! This way of life cannot continue.”

One solution that is included as part of the package of bills (House Bills 5335, 5336, 5694, 6003 and 6181) that strengthens regulations of scrap metal dealers is a “tag and hold” requirement. This piece of the legislation is a deterrent to scrap metal dealers that purchase stolen copper and is crucial to assist law enforcement in tracking down copper thieves by preserving evidence if needed in an investigation.

“With the right tools, we have an opportunity to stop this senseless crime and make our communities safe,” said Reverend James L. Demus III, co-founder and co-director of MAADD. “We need our legislators to act quickly and pass common sense copper theft legislation so that Michigan communities can accomplish that goal.”

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*The Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD) is a 15,000+ member civil rights organization led by ministers devoted to bridging the Digital Divide and promoting economic and individual empowerment in low income and minority communities.*