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# TRaverse CITY RECORD EAGLE

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## Clous called McManus in on another project

### Manager says they've contacted her many times

By  
Record-Eagle staff writer

ELK RAPIDS - Developers of the stalled Elk Rapids Preserve housing project sought the intervention of state Sen. Michelle McManus, just as they have in a disputed wetlands-versus-farming rights case in Grand Traverse County's East Bay Township.

In a letter dated March 17, 2003, to McManus, Eastwood Custom Homes administrative manager James Williams thanks the senator for meeting with him and Eastwood president Bill Clous on March 10.

Williams outlines how the Army Corps of Engineers ordered a halt to work at the Preserve over wetlands concerns. The letter asks McManus to do "anything that you can do to assist us with this matter."

"This exercise with the Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency has cost us thousands of unrecoverable dollars, a loss of lot sales and damage to the credibility of this residential development," Williams wrote.

Williams noted the Army Corps seemed to have "no urgency" in concluding its findings and allowing Eastwood to proceed with the Elk Rapids development.

"They seem to be more concerned with the wishes and concerns of environmentalists and not upsetting them, than they do with us, the property owners and developers who have a large financial stake in the matter," Williams wrote.

Williams stated further delays through another building season - which have since occurred - would have "a

devastating impact on us."

Emily Carney, chief of staff in McManus' office, acknowledged receipt of the Williams letter, and said it was forwarded to U.S. Rep. Dave Camp, R-Midland, "because this is a federal issue."

A review of state campaign finance records shows Clous donated the maximum \$1,000 allowable to McManus' most recent Senate campaign, in 2002.

Said Williams of the meeting with McManus and subsequent letter, "It was just our attempt to make our elected officials aware of where we stood at that point in time."

Williams was asked why Eastwood officials contacted McManus, whose district does not include either Grand Traverse County, where Eastwood's offices are located; or Antrim County, site of the Elk Rapids Preserve project.

"She's an individual we've known and confided in for many years," he said. "We've communicated with Michelle on many issues over the years, both when she was an elected official, and when she was not."

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