

WAUKESHA GREAT LAKES WATER DIVERSION

22 FEB 16



POSITION PAPER

UPPER PENINSULA ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

STATEMENT ON WAUKESHA GREAT LAKES WATER DIVERSION

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, along with its partners, (Friends of the Land if the Keweenaw,) (Save the Wild U.P.), (Yellowdog Watershed Preserve,) (Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Trust,) represents a total membership of over 1400 concerned citizens in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We collectively go on record OPPOSING diversion of Great Lakes water from the watershed of any Great Lake, and in this particular proposal, Lake Michigan.

Under the "Great Lakes Compact" and the companion Agreement, diversions of water from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin to areas outside the Basin are banned - with limited exceptions. The City of Waukesha, Wisconsin, is clearly located outside of the Lake Michigan watershed boundary. The proposal to divert up to 10.1 million gallons per day of Basin water is an extremely dangerous precedent to set for the Compact which was ratified by the U.S. Congress in 2008. Diversions like the one proposed would negate much of the work accomplished by the Lake Superior Binational Program and numerous other regional initiatives.

We feel that water issues will only intensify over the coming decades. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), despite increases in efficiency, water demand in the United States is likely to increase substantially in the future if climate continues to warm.

A study Past and Future Freshwater Use in the United States - A Technical Document Supporting the 2000 USDA Forest Service RPA Assessment A Technical Document Supporting the 2000 USDA Forest Service RPA Assessment 1 concludes that consumptive use of water in the Great Lakes basin will increase only 2% from 1995-2042. Other North American hydrologic basins however, will likely see much greater increased water use, e.g. New England - 15%, South Atlantic/Gulf - 25%, Tennessee - 19%, Lower Mississippi - 27%,

Souris/Red/Rainy - 29%, Upper Colorado - 30%, strongly suggesting that other regions of the U.S. will be looking to the Great Lakes to satisfy a growing demand for fresh water.

The International Joint Commission warns Great Lakes water policy makers "Given the uncertainties associated with future climate change, consumptive use, and possible pressures for removals, and given the additional uncertainties associated with impact assessment methodologies, a precautionary approach is appropriate. To this end, consideration should be given to policies that are well advised from an ecological and economic standpoint irrespective of climate change or unforeseen demands." Source: Protection of the Waters of the Great Lakes Final Report to the Governments of Canada and the United States, February 22, 2000, International Joint Commission.

On the basis of an analysis conducted in a 2008 Argonne National Laboratory, water consumption in the United States can be expected to increase from about 114 billion gallons per day (bgd) in 2005 to about 136 bgd in 2030—an increase of nearly 20% over the 25-year period. Source: Baseline and Projected Water Demand for Energy and Competing Water Use Sectors, Argonne National Laboratory, November, 2008.

Federal and state water managers note in a 2010 Congressional Research Service report that the U.S. energy sector's water consumption is projected to rise 50% from 2005 to 2030. This rising water demand derives from both an increase in the amount of energy demanded and shifts to more water-intensive energy sources and technologies. The more water used by the energy sector, the more vulnerable energy production and reliability is to competition with other water uses and water constraints. Climate change impacts that alter water patterns may exacerbate this vulnerability in some regions. Source: Energy's Water Demand: Trends, Vulnerabilities, and Management - Nicole T. Carter, Specialist in Natural Resources Policy - November 24, 2010.



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In "Past and Future Freshwater Use in the United States: A technical document supporting the 2000 USDA Forest Service RPA Assessment", all categories of water usage, (live-stock, domestic & public, industrial & commercial, thermo-electric, irrigation – Great Lakes Region 27%, nationwide withdrawals are projected at up to +24%, while Great Lakes withdrawals are projected at +2%. It is anticipated that as regions beyond the Great Lakes warm with climate change (particularly Western states,) the demands on water resources will be significant.

As you are aware, increased temperatures of Great Lakes water continues unabated, and expected to continue. Winter ice accumulations are also in significant decline. Both of these climate change related phenomenon lead to increased evaporation and lake level decline over the long run.

The report prepared for the International Joint Commission "Protection of the Waters of the Great Lakes Final Report to the Governments of Canada and the United States, February 22, 2000." includes concerns over withdrawal or diversion of Great Lakes water:

Recommendation

I. Removals

Without prejudice to the authority of the federal governments of the United States and Canada, the governments of the Great Lakes states and Ontario and Quebec should not permit any proposal for removal of water from the Great Lakes Basin to proceed unless the proponent can demonstrate that the removal would not endanger the integrity of the ecosystem of the Great Lakes Basin and that: There are no practical alternatives for obtaining the water, full consideration has been given to the potential cumulative impacts of the proposed removal, taking into account the possibility of similar proposals in the foreseeable future, effective conservation practices will be implemented in the place to which the water would be sent, sound planning practices will be applied with respect to the proposed removal, and there is no net loss to the area from which the water is taken and, in any event, there is no greater than a 5 percent loss (the average loss of all consumptive uses within the Great Lakes Basin); and the water is returned in a condition that, using the best available technology, protects the quality of and prevents the introduction of alien invasive species into the waters of the Great Lakes.

In reviewing proposals for removals of water from the Great Lakes to near-Basin communities, consideration should be given to the possible interrelationships between aquifers and ecosystems in the requesting communities and aquifers and ecosystems in the Great Lakes Basin.

For the above reasons, the Waukesha, WI water diversion application is not in the interest of ecosystem integrity. It should not be permitted.

In summary, Members of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (U.P.E.C.), along with those of its partners, (Friends of the Land if the Keweenaw,) (Save the Wild U.P.) (Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Trust,) (Sierra Club Central U.P. Chapter,) collectively OPPOSE diversion of Great Lakes water from the watershed and urge you to not approve the water diversion application of the City of Waukesha. On behalf of our 1400+ members,

Sincerely,

Nancy Warren Nancy Warren, Acting President,
UP Environmental Coalition

K. Heideman Kathleen Heideman, President
Save the Wild U.P.

Chauncey Moran Chauncey J. Moran, Chairman
Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve

Linda Rulison Linda Rulison, President
Friends of the Land of Keweenaw

Carl Lindquist Carl Lindquist, Executive Director
Superior Watershed Partnership

"As the longest serving environmental organization in Michigan's U.P., the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) strives to preserve the unique cultural and natural resources of the Upper Peninsula, through public education, the promotion of sound land stewardship, and reasoned dialogue with communities, governments, industries and others with whom we share this land." - UPEC Mission

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Written by Gregg Bruff – 18 JAN 16
Approved by the UPEC Board - 20 JAN 16