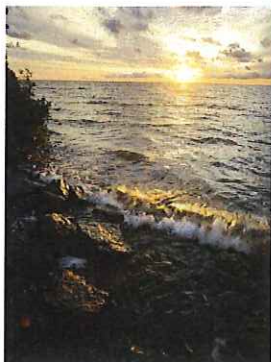


Letter: Diversion won't hurt Lakes

12:07 a.m. EDT September 15, 2015



(Photo: Dale G. Young / The Detroit News)

The Great Lakes will not be harmed by Waukesha, Wisconsin's application to use and return Lake Michigan water under the terms of the Great Lakes Compact.

Waukesha would withdraw 1/100,000,000th of 1 percent of Great Lakes water. And then return the same amount back to the lakes, after use and advanced treatment.

Water for Waukesha will not set a precedent for illegal diversions of water to California or other far-away places. Water is prohibited by the compact from being pumped to areas beyond the borders of counties the surface divide of the Great Lakes, ever since the compact became federal law in 2008.

Because it is in a straddling county, Waukesha can apply to the Great Lakes governors for water under the compact, but must show its need and must return the water to the Lakes.

Despite our effective water conservation program, Waukesha needs a new water supply because our primary source of water has limited recharge and is naturally contaminated with a carcinogen.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is currently reviewing input from a recent public comment period on its draft conclusion that Lake Michigan is Waukesha's only reasonable alternative. It may forward the Waukesha proposal to the other Great Lakes states and provinces late this year. Attempts by some to dismiss Waukesha's application before the compact review process has even begun are premature and threaten the compact's purpose.

The drafters of the compact created objective standards and requirements for fact-finding. They knew that the prior law allowed arbitrary, political decisions that created legal risks to the law itself. So the compact includes a regional review process where the Great Lakes states, with input from the provinces, can examine the facts of a proposal and issue findings. Waukesha's application should be objectively evaluated at the time of this regional review, not through a misleading and inaccurate social media campaign by a Milwaukee-based group of opponents.

Our city provided critical support to pass the compact in Wisconsin, to protect the Great Lakes and to help meet our own water supply needs. We are not a threat to the compact or to the Great Lakes. Approval of our application is an opportunity to show that the spirit of trust and cooperation that led to the compact can be relied on as we face other regional challenges in the future. I urge people to use the compact's process of regional review to make informed decisions.

For more information, please see www.waukesha-water.com (<http://www.waukesha-water.com/>).

Shawn Reilly, mayor

Waukesha, Wisconsin

Read or Share this story: <http://detne.ws/1Fbp1jj>

