

# Water from Lake Michigan is Waukesha's only alternative

Shawn Reilly 10:01 a.m. EST January 12, 2016

The recent editorial ("Governors should say no to Waukesha", Jan. 4) misrepresented the facts surrounding Waukesha, Wisconsin's water needs.

Waukesha has spent nearly a decade examining more than a dozen options to find the most environmentally sustainable solution to its water problems. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has conducted its own analysis and after a five-year review has determined that borrowing water from Lake Michigan is Waukesha's only reasonable alternative.

Waukesha is eligible under the Great Lakes Compact to make its request because it sits in a straddling county, just 1.5 miles west of the Great Lakes surface water divide. It does not set a precedent for water to be sent beyond counties that straddle the basin, which is strictly prohibited by the Compact. It would borrow 1,000,000th of 1% of Great Lakes water, but return the same amount back to the lakes. In doing so, it will help improve the water quality and fishery of the Root River, a key Lake Michigan tributary.

Waukesha has been a leader in conservation efforts and is ahead of schedule on meeting its goals. However, a new supply is still needed. Continued use and treatment of the aquifer water Waukesha has used for decades would actually waste more water than we will conserve.

This is not a choice between protecting the Great Lakes and providing safe drinking water for Waukesha. The Compact clearly ensures that in Waukesha's case, both goals can be met.

MAYOR SHAWN REILLY

Waukesha, Wisconsin, Jan. 7