

*Alliance for the Great Lakes • Environmental Advocates of New York
Minnesota Conservation Federation • National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council • Ohio Environmental Council • Save the Dunes
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council*

Waukesha's Bid to Divert Great Lakes Water Unnecessary Finds New Analysis

Waukesha, Wisc. (July 9, 2015) – A new, independent analysis released today shows that Waukesha, Wisconsin can provide clean drinking water to its residents without diverting water from Lake Michigan. An alternative plan developed by two engineering firms would solve the city's water problem and cost Waukesha taxpayers tens of millions of dollars less than the current proposal to divert water from Lake Michigan. The alternative plan comes to light at a critical time as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is considering a precedent-setting water diversion application under the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, which could make Waukesha the first city straddling the Great Lakes' borders to obtain Great Lakes water.

Authored by two engineering firms, GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. and Mead & Hunt, the "Non-Diversion Solution" report released today focuses on a controversial point in Waukesha's water diversion proposal. Waukesha's current application includes a service area broader than the current households and businesses serviced by the city. Additionally, the need or desire of the additional communities in the expanded service area has never been fully justified. This is inconsistent with the Compact, as the agreement clearly states that diversions for communities that straddle the Great Lakes basin should only be considered as a last resort.

The Non-Diversion Solution released today examines Waukesha's current water service area, while allowing for future residential and industrial growth within that area. The engineering report concludes that Waukesha can continue to use its existing sources – shallow and deep water wells – if radium treatment is added to three of its wells. The report finds that the Non-Diversion Solution alternative is cheaper for taxpayers and will provide Waukesha residents and businesses with clean and healthy water supplies today and into the future.

Specifically, the report finds that the Non-Diversion Solution:

- Costs less than half of a Great Lakes diversion—the Great Lakes diversion will cost \$334 million for Waukesha ratepayers while the Non-Diversion Solution will cost just under \$168 million;
- Will adequately supply drinking water to a growing population within the existing Waukesha city limits and existing water service area until at least 2050;
- Meets or exceeds public health standards for radium and other contaminants with a robust treatment process, included in the Non-diversion Solution's cost estimates; and
- Requires no new wells, which means there is no environmental impact to surrounding wetlands and no dewatering of the St. Peter sandstone aquifer.

The engineering analysis released today is an important piece of information for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to consider as it reviews Waukesha's application. Comments on the environmental impact study are being accepted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources until August 28th, 2015 at DNRWaukeshaDiversionApp@wisconsin.gov.

Passed by all eight Great Lakes state legislatures, consented to by the U.S. Congress, and signed by President George W. Bush in 2008, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact provides ironclad protections against diversions and requires water conservation measures to protect the Great Lakes. Waukesha is eligible under the Compact to apply for a diversion of Great Lakes water because the city lies within a county that straddles the Great Lakes and Mississippi River divide.

After the draft application is finalized by Wisconsin, the application must undergo regional review by the governors of the eight Great Lakes states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Wisconsin, as well as the Canadian premiers of Ontario and Quebec. Under the Great Lakes Compact, the Governors of all eight Great Lakes states must give their consent before the City's diversion application can be approved.

To read the full report, visit: www.protectourgreatlakes.org.

###

Media Contacts:

Alliance for the Great Lakes: Molly Flanagan, (312) 445-9741, mflanagan@greatlakes.org,

Environmental Advocates of New York: Elizabeth Moran, (518) 462-5526 ext. 224, emoran@eany.org

Minnesota Conservation Federation: Gary Botzek, (651) 293-9295, Gary@capitolconnections.com

National Wildlife Federation: Marc Smith, (734) 255-5413, msmith@nwf.org

Natural Resources Defense Council: Margie Kelly, (312) 651-7935, mkelly@nrdc.org

Ohio Environmental Council: Kristy Meyer, (614) 487-5842, KMeyer@theoec.org

Save the Dunes: Nicole Barker, (219) 879-3564, nicole@savedunes.org

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council: Jennifer McKay, (231) 347-1181 jenniferm@watershedcouncil.org