

## Statement from National Wildlife Federation and Alliance for the Great Lakes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, Jan. 7, 2016

### **First Request to Divert Great Lakes Water Heads to Regional Governors and Premiers**

Today the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources forwarded the city of Waukesha's application to divert Great Lakes water to the governors of the eight Great Lakes states and two Canadian premiers for review. It's the first time a request to divert Great Lakes water has been put to the region's governors and premiers since passage of a historic pact to prevent water diversions of the iconic Lakes, while promoting wise water use in the region.

Marc Smith, policy director for the National Wildlife Federation, and Molly Flanagan, vice president of policy for the Alliance for the Great Lakes, both serve on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Council Advisory Committee. They said today in a statement:

“We look forward to reviewing the final application. We remain concerned, however, based on the city's previous draft application that Waukesha has, to date, failed to demonstrate that it needs to divert Great Lakes water—and had no other alternative—to meet its needs. In fact, independent analyses have shown that Waukesha can meet its water needs – saving upwards of \$150 million – by relying on existing water supplies, removing towns from the application that do not need water and following its own water conservation plans. That's why we remain skeptical that this request to divert Great Lakes water meets the strict and protective standards of the Great Lakes Compact.

“As the Great Lakes governors and premiers begin review of this diversion application, we encourage a robust public participation process that allows people across the Great Lakes to have their voices heard and that each state and province take their role seriously in evaluating whether or not this application meets the strict standards in the compact in protecting the Great Lakes.”

According to the compact's ban on diversions, any diversion application must be approved by all eight Great Lakes states, with input from the two Canadian provinces. Any state may veto the diversion application. The governors have from Jan. 12-March 14 to review the application. A public meeting will be held in Waukesha, Wis., in February 2016.

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