

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Full list of media contacts below)

Media Statement

Groups React to Recommendation on Precedent-Setting Great Lakes Water Diversion Request

Today the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Regional Body met and voted on the final Declaration of Findings on the City of Waukesha's Lake Michigan diversion proposal. The Declaration of Findings include conditions added by the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers that will modify the diversion request. After today's vote, the Declaration of Findings will be forwarded to the Compact Council for a final vote in June 2016. All states and provinces supported the Declaration, while Minnesota abstained to vote in order to consult further with stakeholders.

The Great Lakes conservation groups respond to today's vote:

"We appreciate and commend the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Regional Body's serious review of Waukesha's diversion proposal. We are pleased that the Regional Body agreed with us that Waukesha's proposal as submitted does not meet the requirements of the Great Lakes Compact and is recommending modifications to its proposal. But we are disappointed that the Regional Body did not completely reject Waukesha's flawed diversion proposal. We need to carefully examine the conditions that the Regional Body has recommended to determine if they uphold the letter and spirit of the Great Lakes Compact. When complete, we will forward our assessment to the jurisdictions and the Regional Compact Council, which is scheduled to meet on June 21 or 22."

Background

Waukesha, Wisconsin's application to divert water from Lake Michigan is the first test of the Great Lakes Compact, a regional pact banning the diversion of Great Lakes water outside the basin, with limited exceptions.

Under the Great Lakes Compact, any diversion application must be approved by all eight Great Lakes states. The two Canadian provinces bordering the lakes, Ontario and Quebec, are allowed to provide input. Any state may veto the diversion application.

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body includes representatives from each of the jurisdictions, including the states and provinces. At the regional level, the Regional Body is the first step in the decision making process of any diversion request and makes a recommendation to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Compact Council. The Compact Council, which consists of only the governors of the eight Great Lakes states, will meet on June 21 or 22 to review the Regional Body's recommendation and make a final decision on Waukesha's request.

For more information, contact:

Regional

Jennifer Caddick, *Alliance for the Great Lakes*, jcaddick@greatlakes.org, (312) 445-9760

Marc Smith, *National Wildlife Federation*, msmith@nwf.org, (734) 887-7116

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

Indiana

Cathy Martin, *Save the Dunes*, 219-879-3564 x 126, cathy@savedunes.org

Michigan

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

Minnesota

Louise Segroves, *Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy*, lsegroves@mncenter.org, (651) 287-4872

New York

Travis Proulx, *Environmental Advocates of New York*, tproulx@eany.org, 518-462-5526 ext. 238

Ohio

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

Wisconsin

Ezra Meyer, *Clean Wisconsin*, emeyer@cleanwisconsin.org, 608-843-3972

Jodi Habush Sinykin, *Midwest Environmental Advocates*, hslaw@bizwi.rr.com, 414-507-0004

Jennifer Bolger Breceda, *Milwaukee Riverkeeper*, jennifer@milwaukeekeeper.org, 414-430-6446

Denny Canneff, *River Alliance of Wisconsin*, dcaneff@wisconsinrivers.org, 608-257-2424 x 115

Laurie Longtine, *Waukesha County Environmental Action League*, longtine@wi.rr.com, 262-894-8443

Peter McAvoy, *Wisconsin Compact Implementation Coalition*, pmcavoy11@gmail.com, (414) 426-0084

George Meyer, *Wisconsin Wildlife Federation*, georgemeyer@tds.net, 608-516-5545