



**Testimony of Molly M. Flanagan
Regional Body Hearing
February 18, 2016**

Good afternoon. My name is Molly Flanagan. I'm Vice President of Policy at the Alliance for the Great Lakes. The Alliance has been protecting the Great Lakes for more than 40 years and has thousands of volunteers and supporters across the region, including here in Wisconsin and also in your states. The Alliance is an official member of the Great Lakes Regional Body Advisory Committee, a role that we take very seriously.

I was personally involved in negotiating the terms of the Great Lakes Compact and Agreement which I will refer to as Agreements in this testimony. I worked, along with many others, to ensure its adoption in each of the Great Lakes states and support in Congress. Therefore, I understand many of the ins and outs of those negotiations and what was intended as your states signed onto these important agreements.

Perhaps the primary goal of the Agreements were to prohibit diversions of water outside of the Great Lakes basin. Exceptions to this prohibition were written into these documents to potentially allow communities near that Great Lakes basin to tap Great Lakes water as a source of drinking water when all other options were exhausted. I bring this up because the Alliance supports the Agreements and so we are not automatically opposed to all diversions of water. We believe that diversion requests that fall under the Agreements exception standards warrant careful consideration. They must also meet the stringent requirements set forth in the Agreements.

Waukesha, Wisconsin is the first community to attempt to secure a diversion of Great Lakes water under the straddling county exception in the

Agreements. Because it is first, it is also precedent setting and demands a strict adherence to the requirements of the Agreements.

We have taken a careful look at Waukesha's diversion application and we feel that, as written, it fails to meet the requirements so carefully constructed in the Agreements to protect the Great Lakes. Because we are talking about drinking water for a community so close to the Great Lakes, I do not say this lightly. Waukesha may be able to meet the requirements of the Agreements, but it has not done so to date.

The Great Lakes states and provinces entered into the Great Lakes Agreements to protect and preserve the waters of the lake, a precious and irreplaceable resource. You are likely to hear many of the same issues come up again and again in testimony today as people raise similar concerns with Waukesha's diversion proposal. I hope you will take these concerns seriously and carefully examine for yourself whether you are confident that Waukesha has met the requirements of the Agreements.

Put simply, the City of Waukesha: 1) does not justify why it needs so much more water than it is currently using; 2) does not consider all alternatives to provide potable water for its residents; and 3) proposes to divert Great Lakes water to communities that do not need Lake Michigan water and have not requested it. For these reasons, Waukesha's diversion application fails to meet the requirements of the Agreements and should be denied.

We will provide more detailed written comments before the comment deadline.