

## **Mayors call on Premiers, Governors to Defend Integrity of Great Lakes and Compact**

*Great Lakes leaders urged to take firm stand against Waukesha Diversion*

Chicago- Tuesday, February 16 2016- Today, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, representing mayors across the basin, sent letters to the Governors and Premiers of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin strongly urging them to reject the application from the City of Waukesha, Wisconsin to divert water out of the Great Lakes basin.

The Cities Initiative, a group of 121 local governments from the United States and Canada representing over 17 million people, passed a resolution on February 11<sup>th</sup> that outlines the reasons behind its opposition to the water diversion application, highlighting the reasonable alternatives Waukesha has for clean drinking water, the large service area beyond its borders that the water would serve, and the bad precedent that an approval would set for future diversion applications.

"We urge the Governors of the Compact to veto this application and for the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec to take a firm stand against the diversion," said Mayor Mitch Twolan of Huron-Kinloss, Ontario, Chair of the Cities Initiative. "The United States and Canada share these tremendous freshwaters that provide drinking water to over 40 million people in our two countries," Mayor Mitch Twolan added. "Many of my fellow Canadian mayors are concerned about what approval of the Waukesha application would mean for the future of the Great Lakes."

"As mayors, we understand that the City of Waukesha's diversion request provides precious Great Lakes water well beyond the limits of the City of Waukesha. The request for water for this expanded service territory is not

supported by the Compact and we should not support this request in its current form” said Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee.

The wastewater from Waukesha would be returned to Lake Michigan through the Root River and downtown Racine, Wisconsin. Mayor John Dickert of Racine said, “We have serious concerns about what pharmaceuticals, phosphorus, microbeads, and other contaminants in the wastewater will do to an already contaminated river, especially during low flow periods in the summer. Approval of this application would open the door to every community in a straddling county throughout the eight Great Lakes states and the provinces of Ontario and Quebec in Canada.”

This application is the first test of an exception clause that allows communities in counties that straddle the boundaries of the basin to have access to Great Lakes water.

“The Compact is an historic document designed to protect the integrity of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence in the long term, and to approve this application that does not meet the conditions would be a mistake,” said David Ullrich, Executive Director of the Cities Initiative.

The Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of 121 mayors, representing over 17 million people, who work together to protect, restore, and sustain the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin.

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