



Waukesha Diversion Application – Information and Cities Initiative Position February 16, 2016

The City of Waukesha, Wisconsin has applied for a diversion of Lake Michigan Water outside the Great Lakes Basin under the terms of the [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Water Resources Management Compact \(Compact\) and companion Agreement](#).

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recommended approval of the application on January 7, 2016 to the Regional Body and Compact Council created under the Compact.

Cities Initiative Position

The fundamental question is whether the application meets the requirements of the Compact. The Application does not meet these requirements of the Compact:

Reasonable Water Supply Alternative and Conservation

- The standard in the Compact and Agreement for a community in a straddling county is that “There is no reasonable water supply alternative in which the community is located, including conservation of existing water supplies.”
- As to a reasonable alternative, there is at least one and it can be implemented at roughly half the cost of the Lake Michigan diversion alternative. The reasonable alternative is to treat the water from the deep aquifer.
- This treatment combined with blending with cleaner water from the shallow aquifer can meet the drinking water standards.
- Waukesha’s per capita consumption has been going down, and they assert that more conservation measures will be implemented, further reducing demand.

The Community of the City of Waukesha

- The Compact definition of a “Community within a Straddling County” is any incorporated city, town or the equivalent thereof, that is located outside the Basin but wholly within a County that lies partly within the Basin and that is not a Straddling Community.”
- Waukesha wants to provide water to a service area well beyond its City limits
- Service areas are part of Wisconsin law, but not a “community” under the Compact, which is Federal law and is controlling.

Return Flow to the Root River

- Waukesha proposes to return its water diverted from Lake Michigan back to the Lake through the Root River. The Root is already listed as impaired by the Wisconsin DNR, and with low flows in the summer; the wastewater from the City of Waukesha would dominate the stream with about 80-90% of the water.
- The Root River discharges to Lake Michigan in downtown Racine.
- Even if Waukesha met the discharge standards of a permit, the volume and flow of the wastewater could well stir up pollutants in the sediments of the stream causing further problems.

Key dates

- February 18, 2016, Public hearing, Waukesha, WI
- March 14, 2016, Public comment period ends. Send comments in at: <http://www.waukeshadiversion.org/comments/>
- April 21, 2016, Regional Body and Compact Council meeting, Chicago, IL. The Regional Body will review and provide a declaration of finding.
- Full calendar at: <http://www.waukeshadiversion.org/calendar/>

For more information, please contact Simon Belisle (simon.belisle@glslcities.org, 312-201-4517) or David Ullrich (david.ullrich@glslcities.org, 312-201-4516).