



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATION NETWORK**

612 W. Main Street, #200
Madison, WI 53703-4714

Phone: (608) 256-0827
<http://www.lwwwi.org>

November 26, 2013

To: Eric Ebersberger, Section Chief, Wisconsin Department of Resources

Re: Waukesha water diversion proposal

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin advocates for great caution in your consideration of the proposal by the City of Waukesha to divert an average of 10.1 million gallons of water from Lake Michigan daily to meet its water needs.

A member of the League of Women Voters of the Lake Michigan Region, the Wisconsin League supports preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem. We support the Great Lakes Compact, a "responsibility pact" that sets rules for the withdrawal of water from the lakes, and gives bordering communities a say in any decisions to divert water to areas outside the Great Lakes basin.

The water of the Great Lakes is not an infinite commodity. Rain and streams only replenish one percent of the lakes' water each year. The results of over-usage are already seen in the drop in water level in Lake Michigan and other lakes. The lakes are a gift of the retreating glaciers, and once depleted they will not be restored.

We urge you to examine carefully whether Waukesha has met the requirements of the Great Lakes Compact. Specifically, we are concerned that Waukesha has not adequately explored all reasonable alternatives and has not implemented sufficient conservation practices to satisfy the requirements of the Great Lakes Compact.

We do not contest that Waukesha should have reasonable access to water for its current and future needs, including future development within the city limits. However Waukesha should not have the ability to provide water on a contractual basis for other municipalities which have not established a plan for compliance with conservation requirements under state and federal law, as required by the Great Lakes Compact.

Keep in mind that the Waukesha proposal is the first of its kind you are considering. What happens to this proposal will set a precedent for countless future requests from municipalities in all eight Great Lakes states and the two Canadian provinces that border the lakes. The Compact requires that any evaluation of this proposal consider not only the individual impacts of this proposed diversion but the potential cumulative impacts of all future diversions based on the precedent set here.

We believe water conservation should be a high priority of all governments in the basin. We urge you not to approve the current proposal in the absence of firm, complete and detailed plans by the City of Waukesha for minimizing both the certain and the potential environmental impacts of the proposed water diversion.

Thank you.