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Statement by Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly on the Declaration of Finding regarding the city's application for Great Lakes water

The states and provinces of the Great Lakes Regional Body have completed their review of our application to borrow and return Great Lakes water. The Declaration of Finding concludes that Waukesha, with conditions, meets the exception standard of the Great Lakes Compact.

A final decision has not yet been made, but we are hopeful that all the Great Lakes states will agree with the Regional Body's findings. The citizens of Waukesha need the healthy and sustainable water supply that only borrowing and returning Lake Michigan water can reasonably provide.

The City of Waukesha greatly appreciates the diligence and dedicated work of the Regional Body for its technical and legal review. The representatives of the Great Lakes states and provinces, as well as their staffs, came well-prepared and focused on their duties. Once again, the Compact is providing a great example of regional cooperation and the importance of fact-based decision-making.

Waukesha also appreciates the tremendous work of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The in-depth review and analysis by Wisconsin over more than five years provided the quality information needed by the other states and provinces.

We look forward to working with the Compact Council and to the conclusion of the review process next month.



Excerpts of the Declaration of Finding by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body

Note: A copy of the Declaration of Finding that was to be considered on May 18, 1016 is at <http://www.waukeshadiversion.org/notices>.

The findings of the Regional Body include the following:

- “[A]pproximately 100% of the volume withdrawn from the Basin will be returned via flow through the Root River, a tributary of the Basin. This effectively results in no net loss of water volume to the Basin.”
- “The Applicant’s deep aquifer wells draw from an aquifer that is part of a regional aquifer system where withdrawals have exceeded the natural recharge rate.”
- “The groundwater depletion, along with the radium concentration issue, demonstrates that the deep aquifer is not a sustainable or safe source of water for the people served by the Applicant.”
- “[N]one of the evaluated alternatives were found to be reliable sources for a long-term, dependable, and sustainable public water supply and, therefore, the Applicant is without a reasonable water supply alternative.”
- Waukesha’s high quality “return flow will benefit a Basin tributary, the Root River. . . . Increased flow will result in an improvement of the fishery and benefits to the Basin salmonid egg collection facility located downstream on the Root River.”
- “The proposed Exception cannot be reasonably avoided through the efficient use and conservation of existing water supplies and the Exception will be implemented to incorporate environmentally sound and economically feasible water conservation measures to minimize water withdrawals.”
- “Groundwater flow models have demonstrated a direct interconnection between the deep confined aquifer from which the Applicant withdraws groundwater and the [Great Lakes] Basin.” “Continued use of that aquifer draws groundwater away from the Basin” without being returned. “Approving a diversion of Great Lakes water with return flow will result in a net increase of water in the Lake Michigan watershed.”