

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2016

The Honorable Rick Snyder
Governor
State of Michigan
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Snyder:

We write to you today to express our grave concern over the preliminary approval by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Regional Body for the application by Waukesha, Wisconsin to divert 8.2 million gallons of water per day from the Great Lakes. When the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Council (Governors' Compact Council) meets next month for the final determination of this application, we strongly urge you to vote against this proposal and vote in favor of protecting and preserving our Great Lakes.

As you know, the Great Lakes Compact is a legally binding agreement among the eight Great Lakes states that sets parameters and restrictions governing the management of the Great Lakes. It establishes responsible standards for water use and conservation in the basin. The Compact was adopted in 2008 after bipartisan efforts at the state and federal levels of government. It has been the catalyst for significant improvements to the management and conservation of the Lakes' water supply.

Earlier this year, the city of Waukesha, Wisconsin submitted a request to divert water from Lake Michigan. The Compact allows for water diversion to communities within the basin but only under rare and strict conditions. We do not believe the city of Waukesha has made a compelling case that satisfies the severe circumstances outlined in the Compact for its requested diversion of 8.2 million gallons of water per day.

One of Waukesha's arguments for requiring this water is that there are high levels of radium and other contaminants in the groundwater supply and the only source for clean water for its residents is Lake Michigan. We in Michigan are acutely aware of the dangers and concerns of a contaminated water supply. However, we believe that Waukesha has not exhausted all of its options for providing safe and clean water to its residents. Diverting water from the Great Lakes should be a last resort only employed when every other means possible has been exhausted.

The State of Michigan has a long history with managing water levels in the Great Lakes. Since 1900, water has been diverted from Lake Michigan to the Great Lakes system in Chicago, Illinois, for a variety of reasons. Diversion of Lake Michigan waters has varied substantially

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over the years and has been the source of controversy, including a case before the U.S. Supreme Court and a subsequent consent decree. Under the consent decree, Illinois was limited to diverting no more than 3,200 cubic feet of water per second each year. As you recall, in 1995, a dispute arose between Michigan and Illinois because more water was being diverted from Lake Michigan through the Chicago diversion than was allowed by the court decree – levels exceeding as much as 15% more than agreed upon. This dispute was eventually resolved but it remains in the recent memory of Michigianians and creates hesitation when they are asked to support another effort to divert water from Lake Michigan. This is a mistake we need to learn from.

This request from Waukesha is precedent-setting. This is the first time such an application has been presented since the Compact was ratified. We firmly believe the approval of this request would threaten the precious, finite resources provided by our Lakes. As one of eight votes on the Governors' Compact Council, we urge you to vote against this application. It takes all eight governors to approve the request for diversion. We believe you have the ability to stop this latest attempt to pillage our magnificent Lakes and protect it for future generations. We ask that you do the right thing.

Sincerely,



Candice S. Miller



Debbie Dingell