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## **Waukesha Mayor Testifies Before Michigan DEQ on Great Lakes water bid**

### ***Wisconsin DNR: No reasonable alternative to Lake Michigan for City***

Lansing, Mich. – Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly is testifying before the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality today in support of Waukesha’s application to borrow and return Great Lakes water. Waukesha’s application is pending before the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Council (Compact Council), of which Michigan is a member. Under the Great Lakes Compact, the Governors and Premiers of the Great Lakes states and provinces will consider the application later this spring.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the application for more than five years and determined Waukesha has no reasonable water supply alternative to Lake Michigan. The DNR has determined the application meets the terms of the Compact and should be approved.

Waukesha must find a new water supply to meet its current needs because the aquifer it has used to provide water has become tainted with naturally-occurring contaminants and is subject to unique geological features that have led to a severe drawdown of its aquifer. It is under a court order to provide a water supply that meets drinking water standards for the carcinogen radium.

Dan Duchniak, the general manager of the Waukesha water utility, is also testifying at the hearing. Duchniak’s comments will show that a claim that Waukesha could remain on its current water supply if it served a smaller service area is untrue. His testimony explains that the DNR reviewed the claim, and found that Waukesha’s wells could not provide enough water for Waukesha, even for the hypothetically smaller service area.

His testimony notes that the flaws in the claimed alternative include the fact that Waukesha’s actual well capacities are less than the claim assumes. The alternative also fails to consider that the proposed reverse osmosis treatment of groundwater wastes 10% to 20% of the water supply, requiring greater aquifer pumping and causing significant harm to the environment from further drawdowns and from wastewater discharge impacts. The alternative fails to meet radium regulations under all water system operating conditions, thereby failing to meet the requirement of the radium court order. Additional wells would cause unreasonable levels of damage to wetlands, the DNR said.

Mayor Reilly’s testimony discusses the reasons for the application and the extensive examination it has already received. His testimony also dispels several myths about the application.

Excerpts from the Mayor’s testimony are below:

“I am here to support our application to provide a sustainable and healthy drinking water supply for the residents of my community by borrowing and returning Lake Michigan water under the terms of the Great Lakes Compact. The Compact protects the Great Lakes by absolutely prohibiting water from being pumped beyond counties that straddle the Great Lakes Basin divide. But the Compact also allows states to meet public health or environmental challenges in straddling counties when needed – a provision that was essential to getting all the states to adopt the Compact.

“Communities in need in straddling counties can only borrow the water. Return flow ensures no negative impact on lake levels. In our case, we will borrow one one-millionth of 1 percent of Great Lakes water. We will return the same volume, after treatment at one of the best water treatment facilities in our state – a facility we are currently upgrading under a \$72 million improvements program. Our return flow will improve the flow and water quality of a Great Lakes tributary, helping the fishery and an important fish egg collection facility that benefits the Great Lakes.

“In summary, Waukesha’s application meets the legal requirements for the Compact. The decision on Waukesha’s application is not a choice between protecting the Great Lakes and providing safe drinking water for Waukesha. By establishing a clear wall at the borders of straddling counties, and by requiring return flow, the Compact ensure that both goals can be met.”

To view the testimony, please click on Mayor’s and Mr. Duchniak’s full testimony, please click on [Mayor](#) or [Manager](#). Or, for the testimony and more information on Waukesha’s application to borrow Great Lakes Water, please visit <http://www.waukeshaapplication.com/>.

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