

<p>What are the MILWAUKEE MYTHS?</p>	<p>BECKER FRENCH DURKIN ATTORNEYS AT LAW 822 Wisconsin Ave., Racine (262) 633-7530 www.beckerfrench.com</p>	<p>MYTH - Personal injury lawyers all charge the same contingent fee (percentage). Reality - Not all contingent fee contracts are the same (contact us to see how we can save you money on attorney fees). Call Attorney John Becker.</p>
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Journal Times editorial: DNR should approve Waukesha water plan

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August 22, 2015 7:30 pm • [Journal Times Editorial Board](#)

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The long-running debate over the City of Waukesha's plea to tap into Lake Michigan for its water supplies continued with a trio of public hearings by the state Department of Natural Resources last week.

For Waukesha, the issue is one of survival and the ability to grow. The city has 10 municipal wells, including seven deep wells, that draw radium-contaminated water from a sandstone aquifer and it is under court orders to provide radium-safe water by 2018.

By the numbers, the city's situation is fairly self-evident. Last year it used 6.6 million gallons of water per day, most of it pumped from wells. The DNR has said the city will not have a reasonable water supply alternative when demand reaches 8.5 million gallons.

So the city is proposing to buy an average of 10.1 million gallons of lake water per day from Oak Creek and return treated water to Lake Michigan via the Root River.

While some environmental groups continue to oppose Waukesha's proposal, DNR assessments to date indicate the plan will likely have less detrimental effects than other proposals on lakes and streams in the area and it will benefit the Root River by increasing oxygen levels and eliminating low flow problems and diluting phosphorous levels — all of which would help aquatic life.

The City of Racine was once enthusiastic about the Waukesha water purchase — and the plan to return treated effluent via the Root River — but it became less receptive to the idea when it was outbid for the water supply contract by Oak Creek.

The issue of municipalities taking water from Lake Michigan and the rest of the Great Lakes has long been the subject of controversy not only in state's bordering the lakes, but with Canada as well. That issue was resolved with the adoption of the Great Lakes Compact, which bans diversions of Great Lakes waters beyond the surface divide of the Great Lakes.

Because Waukesha is a county that straddles such a divide — with some of its water going into the Mississippi Basin — it is eligible for lake water diversion as long as it returns that water, once treated, to Lake Michigan.

The Journal Times Editorial Board

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In our view, Waukesha's plan meets the requirements and the DNR should give final approval of the plan and send it on to the other Great Lakes states for their approval. It is the only reasonable option and will not set a precedent for shipping precious Great Lakes water any farther than what was envisioned in the lake's compact.

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