

Keep Great Lakes Waters in the Great Lakes

The one thousand miles of shoreline along Lake Superior and Lake Michigan support Wisconsin's economic health and excellent quality of life. The Great Lakes are a vast resource unique to Wisconsin. They contain 20% of the earth's fresh surface water and support a \$15 billion economy.

Unfortunately, while vast, the waters of the Great Lakes are not limitless. With the increasing demands of industry and a growing population here, the Great Lakes are becoming more vulnerable. However, most urgently, the Great Lakes are threatened by the growing pressures from other thirsty states and countries (like Arizona and China) that are looking for Great Lakes water to solve their own shortages.

When Great Lakes water is used by communities within the basin, it generally makes its way back to the lake it came from. When water is used – or diverted – outside of the basin, there is no natural way to return it to the lake. Right now, only 1% of the water in the Great Lakes is renewed annually. A larger change in water levels will chip away at the character of the Great Lakes and their ability to support us in the future.

Fortunately, each of the eight Great Lakes states and two Canadian provinces are currently working to pass a **base** of protections called the Great Lakes Compact. However, with Lakes Michigan and Superior already at near-historic lows, a **base** is not enough for Wisconsin. Greater protections are needed in Wisconsin because pressure is building to allow precedent-setting water diversions that could damage our economy and result in Great Lakes' water being shipped across the country and even the world.

Solution

To protect the Great Lakes now and for future generations, decision makers must support the Compact which includes measures that will better protect the Great Lakes and the Wisconsin residents whose lives and livelihoods depend upon them.

The Strong Compact for a Strong Wisconsin includes the baseline Compact with the following clarifications:

- Requires measurable, meaningful water conservation practices
- Requires the return of all diverted waters to the source in clean condition and via the most environmentally responsible route.
- Closes the bottled water loophole that would let multinational corporations profit from public water resources by allowing diversions one bottle at a time.
- Sets permit and monitoring standards for large water users *within* the Great Lakes basin.
- Maintains the integrity of the Great Lakes watershed by establishing fixed community boundaries.
- Assures an open, public approval process for diversion requests and provides public enforcement options.

Results

Passing **The Strong Compact for a Strong Wisconsin** will:

- Protect the Great Lakes for all Wisconsin citizens and for our children and grandchildren.
- Reclaim Wisconsin's leadership in resource protection among the Great Lakes states.
- Improve Wisconsin's Great Lakes-based economies.
- Enhance sporting and recreational opportunities on and around our beautiful Great Lakes.

Let your legislators know you want to Keep Great Lakes Waters in the Great Lakes—Join us for Conservation Lobby Day 2008 on Wednesday, January 30th!

For more information about **Conservation Lobby Day** or this issue, visit www.conservationvoters.org, or call (608) 661-0845 with questions or to receive a copy of the *Conservation Priorities Agenda* in the mail.