



FIVE LAKES – ONE COMPACT – OUR FUTURE

Great Lakes, Great Michigan Coalition

Water Use Legislation Platform Positions

Michigan's legislature is scheduled to review and pass significant protections for the Great Lakes including the eight-state Great Lakes Compact and accompanying laws. This legislation will safeguard against diversion and misuse of the globally significant waters of the Great Lakes. Such protections will create jobs, improve the economy, and enhance quality of life.

The Compact has been signed by Great Lakes governors. It strengthens existing laws, recognizing the new and unique threats posed by invasive species, increasing consumption and development of wetlands.

As the only state entirely within the Great Lakes basin, Michigan has much more to gain through the Compact and its strengthening laws. We can not afford to wait.

We advocate passage of the Compact with strong implementing laws that will; 1) bring Michigan into compliance with the Compact, and 2) protect Michigan's valuable water for generations to come. Such a package of legislation will create strong protections for the Great Lakes and our valuable inland lakes, streams, groundwater and wetlands.

The laws must include:

- 1. Affirmation of the Public Trust nature of all waters:** Clearly state that all waters are held in trust for the public. That includes surface water, wetlands, streams and groundwater; all of which are vital to the health of our economy, drinking water supply, recreation and ecosystems.
- 2. Prevention of damage to water and wetlands:** Protection for water resources must acknowledge that ecosystems function as a unit; their health depends on the interrelationship of streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater. Therefore, state laws must ensure protection of the system as a whole.
- 3. Conservation:** Large water users should be required to use water efficiently and evaluate conservation measures to protect water resources from the uncertainties of drought, climate change and overuse.
- 4. Permitting:** Large-scale water users must be carefully examined to assess their impact on a river or stream. Any new water bottling plant should also be carefully examined, and the impacts on its neighbors studied and approved only if the public is truly protected. Lastly, our water resources need to be carefully monitored and permits modified if unexpected impacts begin to occur.
- 5. Community Involvement:** Public participation and input into water use decisions must be elevated. Local actions and voices must figure prominently into decisions.
- 6. Restoration:** The Great Lakes will only truly be protected when all users join in efforts to protect it and restore degraded waterways. Permit holders must take part in restoration efforts with quantifiable outcomes.