

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JULY 17<sup>TH</sup>**

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### **Approval by DNR underscores urgency of passing Great Lakes Compact**

*New Berlin Request for Great Lakes water reveals lack of regional rules*

**Madison, WI//** A coalition of Wisconsin conservation groups working toward passage of the Great Lakes Compact today formalized their reaction regarding DNR’s recent “green light” letter in response to New Berlin’s water application.

“The DNR’s announcement last Friday encouraging New Berlin to negotiate a water deal – but cautioning that it had not approved a water diversion - is a great example of why it’s important that Wisconsin pass a strong Compact soon, as it will provide much-needed clarity on the application process,” said Jodi Habush-Sinykin, attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates. “Without the Compact, there are no clear and consistent rules to govern the use of Great Lakes water making it very difficult for the DNR to move forward on proposals such as New Berlin’s. It essentially sets the state up for a series of potential conflicts with other states or with other communities within Wisconsin.”

The coalition of conservation groups has been calling on Wisconsin state legislators to follow the lead of other Great Lakes states who have already ratified the Compact. Neighboring Great Lakes states of Minnesota (where it has passed into law) and Illinois (where it awaits the governor’s signature) have pushed forward in confirming their respective state’s commitment to the Compact. The Compact is also poised to become law in New York where it passed through that state’s senate this week.

The New Berlin application highlights many of the issues that the coalition suggests will be encountered across the region, prompting leaders from the coalition to develop a platform that – if adopted as state law - would provide strong protections for Great Lakes water.

(MORE)

“A strong Compact will help sustain the Great Lakes – so they can continue to support Wisconsin’s long term economic prosperity and quality of life” said George Meyer, Executive Director for Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. “Imagine your most treasured public resource without effective laws to manage it – unfortunately this is the reality of our Great Lakes today.”

The coalition’s *Platform for a Strong Great Lakes Compact* includes the following protective requirements:

- Closing a loophole that would allow the extraction of bottled water from the Great Lakes without review
- Requiring stronger water conservation measures
- Setting environmentally responsible standards governing the use of rivers for purposes of returning water – pumped out of the basin – back to the Great Lakes
- Maintaining the integrity of the Great Lakes basin boundary by limiting annexation by communities
- Assuring public participation and expanding public enforcement options
- Requiring thresholds and monitoring for large in-basin water users

“Wisconsin must pass a strong Great Lakes Compact now that will protect this unique resource for the benefit of all of Wisconsin and the Great Lakes region, including New Berlin,” concluded Melissa Malott, Water Program Attorney for Clean Wisconsin.

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