



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Midwest Environmental Advocates Adds Two New Attorneys and Managing Director,  
Expands Its Ability to Protect State's Water and Air**

**Madison, WI** – Today Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) announced its implementation of a bold plan to expand its ability to protect Wisconsin's water and air by adding two new staff attorneys and a managing director. The state's first and only non-profit environmental law center now has six capable and committed staff working with communities to ensure clean air, clean water and clean government, through free and low cost legal representation, advocacy, community education, and community organizing.

Pacyinz (pronounced Pa-Yeng) Lyfoung now serves as the MEA Managing Director. Immigrating to the United States as a teenager, Ms. Lyfoung became one of the first two Hmong women to earn a law degree from the University of Minnesota School of Law. She has a background in nonprofit management, engaging disenfranchised communities, alleviating poverty, and working with charitable foundations.

Betsy Lawton and Laura O'Flanagan are MEA's new staff attorneys. Ms. Lawton and Ms. O'Flanagan will be implementing and enforcing clean water laws throughout Wisconsin, with a special emphasis on protecting public health from drinking water contamination and unsafe beaches.

Betsy Lawton holds a law degree with a Certificate of Environmental Law from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame. Prior to joining Midwest Environmental Advocates as a Staff Attorney, Ms. Lawton was a litigator and lobbyist with the Progressive Law Group, where she represented plaintiffs in tort, environmental and consumer protection actions. She also served two Dane County judges as a Staff Attorney with the Dane County Circuit Court.

Laura O'Flanagan holds a law degree from Hamline School of Law and a Bachelor of Science in Zoology and Conservation from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Prior

to joining Midwest Environmental Advocates as a Staff Attorney, Ms. O'Flanagan was a litigator for the City of New York, a litigator for the Ho-Chunk Nation, a Brightwood Law Fellow for the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide, and a Conservation Organizer for the Midwest Sierra Club.

While welcoming the new staff, Midwest Environmental Advocates is also saying goodbye and wishing the best to attorney Andrew Hanson. After five years with Midwest Environmental Advocates, he will continue his work for the environment at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, serving as an Attorney Advisor in the agency's Office of Civil Enforcement. Attorneys O'Flanagan and Lawton will carry on Mr. Hanson's work protecting Wisconsin's families from surface water pollution and groundwater contamination.

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