

**MIDWEST ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES * CLEAN WISCONSIN *
WISCONSIN WILDLIFE FEDERATION * FRIENDS OF MILWAUKEE'S RIVERS *
16th STREET COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER * ALLIANCE FOR THE GREAT LAKES *
RIVER ALLIANCE OF WISCONSIN * WISCONSIN LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION
VOTERS * 1000 FRIENDS OF WISCONSIN * WISCONSIN WETLANDS ASSOCIATION *
SIERRA CLUB GREAT WATERS GROUP * BIODIVERSITY PROJECT *
WAUKESHA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION LEAGUE**

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**Coalition Supports Protections for the Great Lakes: Applauds Launching of the
Great Lakes Compact Special Legislative Committee**

Madison, WI. Today Wisconsin legislators are taking a step toward fulfilling their responsibilities to wisely manage Great Lakes water, an effort that has been five years in the making between the eight Great Lakes Governors and Premiers of Ontario and Quebec. The Special Committee on the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact, a legislative committee that aims to produce draft legislation for strong protections for the Great Lakes, meets today at the Capitol.

The Committee is comprised of eight legislators and ten members of the public representing industry, municipalities, and the public interest in promoting the vast, yet vulnerable Great Lakes.

Senator Neal Kedzie, this year's recipient of a Conservation Honor Roll award from the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters and last year's recipient of the Legislator of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, will chair the Committee. Senator Kedzie has previously advanced protections for groundwater quality and quantity, and this Committee offers the opportunity to promote water policy reforms that will prevent costly water conflicts and provide a holistic approach to managing the waters of the state.

A coalition of organizations and individuals is urging the Committee to strengthen the Great Lakes Compact signed by all the Great Lakes Governors last December. Hundreds of people and organizations have signed onto a Great Lakes Compact Platform that urges water policy reforms promoting conservation, limiting diversions, prohibiting the export of the Great Lakes, and improving public participation opportunities.

Jodi Habush Sinykin, Of Counsel at Midwest Environmental Advocates, and a Committee member stated that, "the Great Lakes are a world class resource and essential to our state's heritage and well being; it is our responsibility to ensure their protection for the people, businesses and wildlife that rely on them."

"Thanks to Senator Kedzie and other legislative leaders at the table, this Committee has a great opportunity to make Wisconsin a regional leader in protecting the Great Lakes for future generations," said Keith Reopelle, Program Director for Clean Wisconsin and a Committee member. "But the protection bar must be set high to accomplish that goal," he added.

The Committee will meet regularly between September and December, with a goal of producing draft legislation to be introduced in early 2007.

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FAST FACTS ABOUT THIS ISSUE

- The Great Lakes Compact Platform calls for Great Lakes Compact implementing legislation with the following improvements:
 1. Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine by eliminating the bottled water loophole that allows the export of Great Lakes water in containers sized 5.7 gallons or less;
 2. Strengthen the ban on diversions to ensure that diversions occur only in absolutely necessary situations;
 3. Set a meaningful regulatory level for in-basin users of Great Lakes water; and
 4. Require strong water conservation standards.
- For an in-depth analysis of the Great Lakes Compact and the issues faced by the Great Lakes states, read ***Realizing the Promise of the Great Lakes Compact: A Policy Guide for State Implementation***, found at <http://www.midwestadvocates.org/advocacy/water/annex/index.htm>.
- To view the full list of Committee members of Special Committee on the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact, go to http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/3_COMMITTEES/Special%20Committees/2006/GLAKE/06%20glake.pdf.