



## NEWS RELEASE

### Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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**DATE:** August 20, 2004

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**SUBJECT:** Comment sessions set for Great Lakes water use proposals

### *Annex 2001 draft implementing agreements on tap*

**MADISON** – Wisconsin will hold five open house and public comment sessions in September and October to gather input on proposed draft agreements among the Great Lakes states and Canadian provinces to update how they protect and manage the Great Lakes.

The draft agreements, often known as the Annex 2001 implementing agreements, propose how the 10 jurisdictions will collectively manage water quantity issues in the basin including requests for withdrawing water from the basin and for discharging water outside it.

The Department of Natural Resources is hosting the comment sessions on behalf of the Council of Great Lakes Governors. On July 19, Gov. Jim Doyle and Ohio Gov. Bob Taft, co-chairs of the council, announced the start of a 90-day public comment period for the draft agreements, which representatives from state and provincial environmental agencies developed over the past three years.

“As co-chair of the council, I recognize how vitally important water quantity issues are to our state and to the region,” Doyle says. “Wisconsin’s economy depends on the availability of a clean and plentiful supply of water and these drafts seek to ensure that the Great Lakes continue to be a viable resource and are protected for future generations. We want to hear what Wisconsin citizens think of these drafts and how to improve them.”

Todd Ambs, DNR’s top water leader, called the proposed agreements “unprecedented in the world” and said the five Wisconsin sessions would give citizens a variety of opportunities to comment on one of the “most significant water issues impacting the Great Lakes in our lifetimes.”

“We’re working to put in place a system that recognizes that all of us in the Great Lakes region are connected by the largest source of fresh water in the world,” Ambs says. “We need to take bold steps to ensure that all significant decisions affecting that resource are connected as well.”

Comments gathered at the Wisconsin sessions will be forwarded to the council for the working group to consider as they develop the final drafts to submit to the governors and premiers for their consideration, Ambs says. Gov. Jim Doyle also will receive the Wisconsin comments.

The proposals would implement Annex 2001, an amendment to the Great Lakes Charter, which itself was signed in 1985 by the 10 jurisdictions: Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Quebec. That good faith agreement called on the

jurisdictions to regulate all requests for withdrawals of two million gallon a day of water from the Great Lakes, and to submit for informal review by the other signatories requests for removing five million or more gallons.

The council started updating the charter in the late 1990s to respond to concerns that private and public interests outside the basin wanted to tap into Great Lakes water. That concern grew following a Canadian company's 1998 request to remove 60 million gallons per year from Lake Superior to sell in Asia. Ontario initially granted the request but later rescinded it.

The proposed implementing agreements seek a binding, formal agreement, not just a good faith agreement, among the jurisdictions, "to help avoid conflicts and shortages in the future and protect the resource and related ecosystems," the council says. "These agreements will ensure that authority over the Great Lakes remains with the Governors and Premiers."

Key provisions establish a new standard for reviewing proposed withdrawals and formally include the eight Great Lakes governors and the premiers of Ontario and Quebec in reviewing proposed diversions and consumptive use of water. Diversions occur when water is removed from the basin. Consumptive uses occur within the basin and can include such things as bottling water, drinking water supply, irrigation and industrial use of water.

View the full agreement and related materials at the council's Web site: [www.cglg.org](http://www.cglg.org)

Wisconsin's public comment sessions, with the exclusion of the Oct. 5 Duluth session, will all feature an open house from 4 to 6 p.m. with information stations and staff on hand to answer questions. A formal presentation and the public comment period will start at 6 p.m.

The Oct. 5 Duluth session, which DNR is jointly hosting with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, will run from 4 to 8 p.m. but the format hasn't been decided.

The locations and dates are as follows:

- **Tuesday, September 28** – Milwaukee, Wisconsin State Fair Park Youth Center, 84th Street just south of I-94. Enter Gate 5--the Center and parking lot are on the left.
- **Thursday, September 30** – Ashwaubenon, Ashwaubenon Village Hall Council Chamber, 2155 Holmgren Way. Visitors should enter using the Public Safety entrance.
- **Monday, October 4** – Stevens Point, UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources lobby and auditorium, 800 Reserve St.
- **Tuesday, October 5** – Duluth, Holiday Hotel & Suites, Lake Michigan Room, 200 W. 1<sup>st</sup> St.
- **Wednesday, October 6** – Ashland, Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, U.S. Highway 2 and County Highway G, west of Ashland.

People also can submit written comments or comment online. Send written comments to David Naftzger, Executive Director, Council of Great Lakes Governors, 35 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 1850, Chicago, IL 60601. Submit e-mail comments to [Annex2001@cglg.org](mailto:Annex2001@cglg.org) or enter them online at <http://www.cglg.org>.