State Senator

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11th Senate District

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Statement Regarding Final Passage of the Great Lakes Compact Bill

While many days in the last few months have been labeled as "historic", I believe today is truly the historic day we all have been anxiously awaiting, as the State Senate adopted the compromise legislation to implement and ratify the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact. The Compact has traveled a tumultuous path in the last seven years and I am proud to have cast my vote in the affirmative for this paramount piece of environmental legislation.

During my time in the Legislature, and perhaps at no other time, have we faced a challenge such as the Great Lakes Compact. We, as legislators, have been tested over our respective careers with pressing environmental protection issues, such as acid rain, recycling, groundwater, wetlands, mercury emissions, and the list goes on. Each time, I believe we have performed to the best of our ability to meet those challenges in our shared goal of preserving Wisconsin's precious and abundant natural resources.

As I have stated previously, the version of the Compact passed two months ago by the Senate did not fully encompass the ideas and principles of all the affected parties. I commend the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Natural Resources Committees – State Senator Mark Miller and State Representative Scott Gunderson, respectively – for their diligent effort to bring this process to a finality and deliver the Compact and the legislation needed to implement the Compact as a consensus product. As the former Chair of the Great Lakes Compact Legislative Study Committee, I fully understand the difficulty in achieving that goal due the complexity of the legislation and the magnitude of the issue.

The Compact is a commitment by the eight Great Lakes states to protect our greatest freshwater source, while at the same time, is an assurance to the residents of those states that their water needs can be met. History will judge our actions today and if we chose the correct course. For the betterment of the Great Lakes basin and the people of Wisconsin, I believe we have.

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