



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 15th, 2008

Contact: Keith Reopelle, Program Director, 608.251.7020 ext. 11 (ofc), 608.212.2935 (cell)
Melissa Malott, Water Program Director, 608.251.7020 ext. 13 (ofc), 608.220.0167 (cell)

Historic Great Lakes Protections Past
Legislature Passes Great Lakes Compact in Special Session

Madison- The state legislature convened in a special session yesterday and passed the Great Lakes Compact, an agreement between eight states and two Canadian provinces not to divert water outside of the Great Lakes region. The Compact passed with an overwhelming majority of 97-1 in the assembly and 32-1 in the Senate.

“Today is a great day for Wisconsin, and the Great Lakes Region as a whole,” said Keith Reopelle, Program Director at Clean Wisconsin, the state’s largest environmental advocacy organization. “The Great Lakes are important for recreation, tourism and industry in Wisconsin. The need for their protection is evident.”

The bill represents a compromise between a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including environmental organizations, developers, industry and municipalities.

“The Compact is a delicate balance of the interests of all interested parties,” said Melissa Malott, Water Program Director at Clean Wisconsin. “The broad coalition of support for the bill demonstrates the importance of the Great Lakes to all Wisconsinites.”

Wisconsin’s passage of the Great Lakes Compact is an important step in preventing Great Lakes water from being sold to interests outside the region. Preventing the diversion of water from the Great Lakes reduces the risk of water shortages and lowered lake levels, which present a threat to Wisconsin’s environment, tourism and industry.

After the Senate passed the Compact with a 26-6 bipartisan supermajority in regular session the Assembly failed to bring the measure to a vote, prompting Governor Doyle to call the special session. Governor Doyle is expected to sign the Compact later this month.

“Today we celebrate the passage of the Compact and applaud the leadership of Governor Doyle, Senators Miller, Cowles, Jauch, Lehman and Wirch, Representatives Gunderson, Mason and Richards, and the DNR, in ensuring Great Lakes water does not get sold to the highest bidder,” Malott said. “Now that the water in the Great Lakes is here to stay, we can begin taking action to clean it up.”

Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy organization, protects Wisconsin’s clean water and air and advocates for clean energy by being an effective voice in the state legislature and by holding elected officials and corporations accountable. Founded in 1970 as Wisconsin’s Environmental Decade, Clean Wisconsin exposes corporate polluters, makes sure existing environmental laws are enforced, and educates citizens and businesses. On behalf of its 10,000 members and its coalition partners, Clean Wisconsin protects the special places that make Wisconsin such a wonderful place to live, work and play. Phone: 608-251-7020, Fax: 608-251-1655, Email: info@cleanwisconsin.org, Website: www.cleanwisconsin.org.

###