

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Shawn N. Reilly, Mayor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Waukesha Mayor Applauds 10th Anniversary of the Great Lakes Compact

WAUKESHA, WI – (October 1, 2018) As we approach the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Great Lakes Compact, Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly applauded the bipartisan effort that made it happen.

“Creating the Great Lakes Compact was an incredible accomplishment,” Reilly said. “It took years of effort by ten states and provinces. It required compromises among a wide range of stakeholders on how to protect this amazing natural resource. The Compact is a great example of lawmakers achieving consensus to address an important issue.”

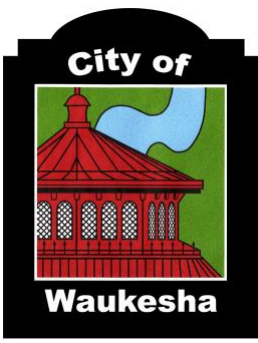
The Mayor said Waukesha is proud to have supported the passage of the Compact. “It took more than two years of effort to work out the state-level details that Wisconsin added to the Compact, but it passed with only two no votes,” Reilly said. The Compact was then passed on a bipartisan basis on the federal level and signed into law by President George W. Bush ten years ago, on October 3, 2008.

Reilly, who is also an attorney, said, “The beauty of the Compact is that it requires decisions to be made on objective and scientific criteria, not on politics. That puts the law on a sound legal footing. It gave us the chance to show that using and returning Great Lakes water was a necessity for Waukesha and that it would provide environmental benefits to the region. Our application showed that the Compact process does work and the Great Lakes will be protected for the long term based on the precedent our application set for the future.”

The Compact created a ban on piping water beyond the borders of counties that straddle the Great Lakes Basin. But it allows communities outside of the Basin and within a straddling county – like Waukesha – to seek permission to use and return Great Lakes water.

The Compact required Waukesha to provide documentation that it had no other reasonable water supply alternative. It also required Waukesha to return the water after use and treatment. And it required unanimous approval by the Great Lakes governors.

“Under the Compact law, Great Lakes water can never be piped to California or even to western Wisconsin,” Reilly said. “But it allowed Waukesha to win unanimous approval for a water supply that is safe and sustainable for the long term. Passage of the Compact was essential to our city’s future.”



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Waukesha's current groundwater supply is severely drawn down due to a geological feature and is also contaminated with naturally-occurring radium, a human carcinogen. Waukesha will switch to Lake Michigan water by 2023.

"The Great Lakes states and provinces concluded that our project will benefit the environment," the mayor noted. Waukesha will return 100% of the volume of water it uses from Lake Michigan via a tributary, the Root River. "Our levels of wastewater treatment are matched by only a handful of communities in the state, so our return flow water will actually make the river cleaner," he said. "The additional water in the river will also help fish get upstream during periods of low flows, including spawning season. The fish eggs will be collected and used for restocking the Great Lakes. It's a win-win solution."

More information about the history and the future of the Waukesha water project, dubbed the Great Water Alliance, is available at www.greatwateralliance.com.

For more information, please contact:

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