

**Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Council  
Meeting Summary**

June 13, 2024

Approximately 9:48 a.m. EST

1300 Elmwood Avenue

Science and Math Complex, Room 151

Buffalo State University

Buffalo, New York 14222

Remote participation was available to individuals registering at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3537871516037555039>

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**Notice:**

Notice of the meeting was provided to the public through the Great Lakes Information Network's distribution list on May 14, 2024. Notice was also posted to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Council (Compact Council) website at [www.glscompactcouncil.org](http://www.glscompactcouncil.org). The notice included an announcement that the meeting agenda, draft resolutions and materials to be discussed during the meeting were available on the Compact Council's website. Call-in information was also posted to the front page of the Compact Council website.

**Call of Meeting:**

9:48 a.m. EST— The meeting was called to order by Karen Stainbrook, Director, Bureau of Water Resource Management, Division of Water New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

**Roll Call:**

The following Compact Council members, constituting a quorum, were present:

**Illinois (alternate of Governor J.B. Pritzker):** Loren Wobig, Director, Office of Water Resources, Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

**Indiana (alternate of Governor Eric Holcomb):** Ryan Mueller, Deputy Director, Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

**Michigan (alternate of Governor Gretchen Whitmer):** James Clift, Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy.

**Minnesota (alternate of Governor Tim Walz):** Jess Richards, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

**New York (alternate of Governor Kathy Hochul):** Karen Stainbrook<sup>1</sup>, Director, Bureau of Water Resource Management, Division of Water New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on behalf of James Tierney, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (ret).

**Ohio (designee of Governor Mike DeWine):** Dena Barnhouse<sup>1</sup>, Chief, Division of Water Resources, on behalf of Mary Mertz, Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

**Pennsylvania (designee of Governor Tom Wolf):** Tim Bruno, Chief, Office of the Great Lakes, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

**Wisconsin (designee of Governor Tony Evers):** Adam Freihoefer<sup>1</sup>, Water Use Section Chief, on behalf of Preston Cole, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

### **Actions Taken**

#### ***Review of December 7, 2023 Compact Council meeting minutes***

Ms. Stainbrook asked for a motion that the December 7, 2023 Compact Council meeting minutes be approved as posted. Mr. Wobig moved to approve, and Mr. Freihoefer seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without objection.

### **Reports**

Noting that the Regional Body meeting adjourned immediately prior to the Compact Council meeting, a motion was made by Mr. Wobig to incorporate minutes of the Regional Body reports into the Compact Council minutes. Mr. Freihoefer seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Pursuant to the approved motion, the following reports are incorporated by reference into the Compact Council's record and re-printed in their entirety below:

#### ***State and Provincial updates on implementation of the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement (Agreement).***

***Without objection, all jurisdictions were granted permission to submit their reports in writing and have them incorporated into this Meeting Summary.***

### **New York**

- Good morning, I am Karen Stainbrook. I am the Director of the Water Resource Management Bureau in the Division of Water in the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. And I am serving as proxy for Don Zelazny. New York is honored to be Chair and to host the Regional Body and Compact Council in Buffalo.

- NYS's Water Withdrawal Program continues to comply with the Compact & Regional Agreement. The DEC's Division of Water currently regulates by permit or registration all water withdrawal systems with the capacity to withdraw 100,000 gallons per day or

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<sup>1</sup> Signed proxy forms for individuals participating on behalf of official member designees are available upon request.

more from either surface or groundwater sources within the Basin. For all types of water withdrawal facilities, each permit application requires the submittal of a water conservation plan. The main objective of the plan is to promote implementation of the most environmentally sound and economically feasible water conservation measures. All registered or permitted facilities are required to submit an annual water withdrawal report to DEC. This includes over 700 actively reporting facilities within the Great Lakes Basin.

- So far in 2024, DEC has issued 58 water withdrawal permits statewide, with 17 of those permits located within the Great Lakes basin.

- Over the past few years, NYS has been working on improving data quality, and the type of data that is made available to the public. Water withdrawal spatial information and individual water well information available on an online mapper called DECinfo Locator on the NYS DEC website. The data is also available in various map and tabular formats on NYS Open data.

- Most of New York's 2023 Annual Water Withdrawal Reports have been received. As in previous years, our water withdrawal data will be shared with the Commission and reported to this group in December. We continue to update our database and QA/QC the annual reporting data as necessary.

- The New York State Energy Research and Development's (NYSERDA) improved efficiency standards went into effect in 2023, requiring lower flow rates for showerheads, urinals, and bathroom and kitchen faucets sold or installed in NYS.

- Earlier this year, DEC funded a New York Drought Summit in partnership with Cornell's Water Resources Institute to bring practitioners together to discuss drought monitoring tools, resources, management approaches, and communications needed to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of future droughts.

- Having completed all remediation and restoration actions deemed necessary to remove all beneficial use impairments, DEC and the EPA are recommending that the Rochester Embayment be removed from the list of 43 Areas of Concern designated under the U.S.- Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The delisting process is anticipated to be completed in October. This will be the second of New York's six AOCs to be delisted. DEC and other AOC restoration partners continue progress remediating contaminated sediments, restoring fish and wildlife habitat, and removing BUIs in New York's four remaining AOCs.

- New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda was updated in 2023 and includes an implementation strategy to "Evaluate and promote actions to protect and sustain drinking source waters, including water supply

aquifers and surface waters”, with specific priority actions designed to focus state policies, programs and ongoing funding opportunities.

- And finally, DEC is continuing to work through the rulemaking process for our Part 601 (water withdrawal) and Part 602 (Long Island well) program regulations. The rulemaking seeks to clarify current permitting requirements, definitions, and permitting exemptions. The rulemaking will likely be posted for public notice later this year and the public notice can be shared with the Regional Body and Compact Council members.

- We look forward to continuing to work with the other jurisdictions on common concerns and issues.

With that, I conclude my report.

### Illinois

Mr. Wobig submitted the following report:

#### ***Lake Michigan Diversion***

The Illinois Lake Michigan Water Allocation Program has hired Luz Payan, an Administrative Assistant, to aid Lake Michigan water communities with water system improvement plans, water use reporting and to evaluate the types of planning assistance that could be provided to permittees help reduce water loss, particularly for economically marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Illinois also welcomes Eric Otto, who will serve as the new Lake Michigan permits engineer. IDNR Lake Michigan program has also put out a job notice for a Water Allocation Engineer to help streamline and continue to manage Illinois' diversion of water from Lake Michigan in accordance with the 1967 Supreme Court Decree amended in 1980 limiting Illinois' diversion to 3,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) based on a 40-year running average.

Lake Michigan continues to service over half of Illinois population of 12.5 million people. Illinois water Illinois' Diversion Accounting is managed by the IDNR and is overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Chicago District. The USACE's most recent certified diversion for water year (WY) 2019 (October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019) is **3198 cfs with a 40-year running average of 3066 cfs**. As the higher 40-year-old water use numbers drop out the back end of running average, the running average continues to generally decline reflecting much improved water conservation in Illinois. However, Illinois is now turning its attention to aging infrastructure water loss reduction.

#### ***Lake Michigan Water Use Data Collection***

In compliance with the Compact, the Department continues to collect potable water supply, consumption, and water loss information from each of its 227 Lake Michigan Water Allocation Program permittees on an annual basis as required by their allocation

permits. All permittees submitted data to the Department for WY2018. Remaining years are still be received and reviewed by the Department.

All 19 direct diverters, including the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago continue to submit monthly pumpage reports detailing Lake Michigan water used for Direct Diversion. Direct Diversion also includes releases at the Lake Michigan control structures including lockage, leakage, navigational make up, and discretionary flow. All data collected continues to be submitted to the USACE to be used for diversion accounting.

### ***Lake Michigan Water Allocations***

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Office of Water Resources has completed its newest Re-Allocation Study and has published the findings. The primary goal of this once every decade review is to adjust each permittee’s allocation, as needed, to reflect future water demand through future Water Year decades. The Department did not receive any contests to the Re-allocation study, even with generally reduced allocations for almost all allocatees, and is sending revised permit allocations to all permittees in the summer of Water Year 2024.

### ***New Allocations and Requests***

Between September 2021 and June 2023, the Department received nine applications for Lake Michigan water allocations from:

- Village of Lemont, IL
- Village of Romeoville, IL
- City of Crest Hill, IL
- Village of Oswego, IL
- Village of Channahon, IL
- Village of Minooka, IL
- Village of Montgomery, IL
- United City of Yorkville, IL
- Pekara System – Lake County, IL

Extensive allocation petition reviews, pre-hearings, and the hearings finished for these communities in 2023, and orders are being finalized bringing the total Lake Michigan Allocation orders in Illinois to 227.

### ***Brandon Road***

In collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers and with significant support from the state of Michigan, design of standalone and functional Increment 1 (aka leading-edge deterrents) including sound and bubble deterrent systems and lowering the engineered channel bottom is nearly complete for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project and the initial design efforts for Increment 2 continues. Illinois is grateful to the state of Michigan for consistently advancing non-federal “Accelerated Funds” via Illinois to the Corps when requested to keep the project design advancing at least through the end of June. The Design team leadership continue to collaborate to address key project

challenges including project costs, private land rights, potentially hazardous waste remediation, Project Partnership Agreement terms, and project regulatory matters. At the end of May, the state of Illinois and the Corps of Engineers completed and submitted a joint permit application for standalone Increment 1 of the project that specified key public water impact mitigation measures. A public notice for the project will be issued soon to provide project site neighbors and interested parties an opportunity to review project exhibits illustrating the components and layout of the project and an opportunity to provide any relevant comments on the application. The Corps is currently field testing combined bubble barrier and acoustic deterrents interactions at the Morris Pits off the Illinois River. These tests are indicating over 80% effectiveness in deterrence of Invasive Carp. In mid-May, the Senate released their draft version of WRDA24 that included changing long term operation, maintenance, repairs, remediation, and replacement federal/state cost relationships from 80/20 to 90/10 to match project construction funding cost share changes implemented by WRDA2022.

### ***Offshore Wind Energy***

Private offshore wind energy interests have approached the state of Illinois to discuss floating wind energy pilot projects in response to offshore wind energy legislation that passed last year providing an opportunity to develop offshore wind energy on Lake Michigan. The Illinois DNR has developed a siting matrix within the Illinois portion of Lake Michigan but is interested in comparing such criteria with criteria used by other states.

### ***Coastal Management Program and Shoreline Resilience***

The Coastal Management Program staff in Illinois continues to grow back to its original capacity with the recent addition of 5 new team members including the amazing Meg Kelly as the Director of the Program. Meg is new to her position but well experienced in coastal management and climate resiliency. Meg is working to renew the program's vision and strategic priorities to support Illinois' coastal resources from the Wisconsin to the Indiana borders.

The Coastal Management Program is getting ready to announce over \$1 million of grant funding to be awarded to Illinois organizations for coastal education, recreation, water quality protection, planning, and design and engineering projects along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Grants will start in September to support 16 organizations over 18 months.

The Illinois DNR is finalizing construction of our \$73 million-dollar large-scale shoreline break water protection project at Illinois Beach State Park (IBSP) that now protects nearly 2.2 miles of Illinois Beach State Park shoreline. The project includes 22 creatively shaped offshore breakwaters and submerged reef structures, positioned to reduce the erosive force of incoming waves, redirect nearshore currents, and provide a new home to shoreline aquatic and avian species. The project also includes shore attached

breakwaters, groins near natural waterway outlets, and beach nourishment. The project was recently awarded two (2) coveted awards:

1. Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG) Certification/ Verification; and
2. American Shore and Beach Preservation Association's Best Restored Beach Award for 2024.

The Illinois Coastal Management Program was recently selected to receive \$2.3 million of NOAA Habitat Protection and Restoration Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Competition funding for our project titled 'Combined Hydrology, Water Quality, and Botanical Characterization to Guide Coastal Wetland Restoration and Management that will develop baseline hydrology, plant and water quality information at Illinois Beach State Park to inform future restoration of wetlands and beach plant communities within the State Park.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor of Illinois,

Loren A. Wobig, P.E., CFM

### **Indiana**

Mr. Mueller provided the following report:

Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning everyone. I'm Ryan Mueller, Deputy Director for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, representing Governor Eric Holcomb.

### **Today I'll briefly review Water use in the Indiana portion of GL basin for reporting year 2022**

- Currently there are 1063 Significant Water Withdrawal Facilities (SWWF) registered in the Basin.
- Like many jurisdictions, a SWWF has the capacity to withdrawal 100,000 gallons or more, a day.
- Have added about 15 new facilities in last two years, mostly irrigation
- Water use in the Basin for 2022 totaled approximately ~543 billion gallons
- There has been a decrease of about 250 billion gallons over the last 5 years, mainly driven by Energy Production/ Industrial use that have implemented conservation measures or that have ceased operations
- Of the 1063 SWWF:
  - o 1606 wells (a facility can have multiple wells / intakes) – Accounting for 35 BG
  - o 241 surface intakes – Accounting for 508 BG
- When you compare withdrawal vs. capacity:
  - o SWWF total – 18.6%
  - o Surface – 21%

- Wells – 7%

Staff are in the process of making final efforts to collect and review 2023 water use data. Thank you, this concludes my report and I will submit a written copy of my report.

### **Michigan**

Mr. Clift submitted the following report:

#### **5-Year Program Review**

Michigan has developed its draft five-year Water Management and Water Conservation and Efficiency Program Review and is on track to submit the draft program review on June 28. Michigan's program continues to fulfill Michigan's Compact requirements. There are no major changes to the program since the 2019 report. Since 2019, significant state investments have been made to enhance Michigan's Water Use program and agencies and partners have expanded and diversified outreach and engagement programming and activities to promote water conservation and efficiency.

As part of Michigan's Program review engagement process, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) held two meetings with Michigan's federally recognized Tribal governments this spring to review the report, highlight program updates, and gather initial input and feedback on the draft report. In addition, EGLE invited Pete Johnson to provide an overview and history of the Compact and water management in the region. EGLE is planning on a formal public comment period this summer and additional consultation with tribal governments.

#### **Implementation of WUAC Recommendations**

Michigan's Water Use Program continues to work with the Water Use Advisory Council (WUAC) to advance and improve Michigan's Program. The WUAC continues to play a key role in water management and water conservation and efficiency in Michigan. Michigan Legislature approved approximately \$10 million to fund the WUAC's 2020 Biennial Legislative Report recommendations. State agencies are implementing these recommendations. Two of the funded recommendations were put forward by the council's Water Conservation and Efficiency Committee. Michigan State University Extension hired two additional educators focused on increasing educational programming on water conservation and efficiency for the agricultural sector and expanding programming to include animal industries. EGLE's Office of the Great Lakes awarded a grant to the Alliance for Water Efficiency for a project to identify innovations and technological advancements in water conservation best practices that can benefit Michigan's water sectors with a focus on business and industry sectors. This project will be co-funded by the WUAC's funding and the Michigan Great Lakes Protection Fund.

#### **Water Infrastructure Investments**

Investing in water infrastructure remains a priority for Michigan. Governor Whitmer announced in April 2024 an additional \$290 million to be split between the Clean Water



State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). In Fiscal Year 2024 EGLE provided historic water infrastructure financing and funding opportunities to communities for about \$1.7 billion. Michigan was also one of only two states to receive an ‘A’ grade from the National Resources Defense Council equity report card for state revolving fund programs.

EGLE launched the Affordability and Planning grant program for water infrastructure. This program is part of Michigan’s Clean Water Plan designed to provide funding to address water infrastructure needs across the state and assist communities in addressing affordability and planning needs. EGLE provided \$5.7 million in funding. EGLE has partnered with Michigan Saves, the nation’s first nonprofit green bank, to offer financing for the replacement of failing or near-failing septic systems through the Septic Replacement Loan Program (SRLP). The program provides low-interest financing options for loans up to \$50,000 to Michigan homeowners looking to replace their septic systems.

### **Michigan Water Withdrawals**

To date, in 2024, there have been 210 new large quantity withdrawals (LQW) registered or permitted. Program staff members conducted 88 reviews of these withdrawal requests or permit applications, and 122 were self-registered via the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool.

### **Data Collection, Data Warehouse, and Models**

Work continues to develop an agency-wide groundwater data warehouse. This will provide a common location and format for environmental data submitted by EGLE staff and external parties. The data warehouse system will be expanded in the future to include other types of environmental data (e.g., geologic, surface water, sediment, soils, soil gas). EGLE recently awarded a grant to begin the implementation of the system.

### **MI Healthy Climate Plan Implementation**

Michigan continued to implement the MI Healthy Climate Plan and its goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. Among the many initiatives launched by the plan, EGLE offices and divisions are working together to develop and promote programs that reinforce the link between water conservation, energy conservation, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction. For example, diesel agricultural pumps are eligible for a repowering program to be replaced by more efficient electric pumps. Grant programs also put an emphasis on underserved communities and environmental justice.

### **Outreach and Education**

EGLE organized a variety of outreach events to address Michigan’s education and outreach goals to promote water sustainability and stewardship. EGLE recently hosted

Great Lakes and Fresh Water Week to raise awareness of the Great Lakes and Michigan’s inland waterways and groundwater, with a focus on water and wellness.

EGLE also hosted Drinking Water Week earlier this spring. EGLE is also working on a third phase of the From Students to Stewards Initiative to increase Great Lakes literacy and provide place-based educational opportunities. EGLE continues to pursue opportunities to promote freshwater literacy and Great Lakes stewardship.

## **Minnesota**

Mr. Richards submitted the following report

### **OVERVIEW OF WATER USE IN MINNESOTA’S LAKE SUPERIOR BASIN**

- There were 127 active water appropriations in Minnesota’s Western Lake Superior Basin, which is a decrease of 7 from the previous year.
- 100% of permitted appropriators reported their water use in 2023.
- The Western Lake Superior Basin ended 2023 in the “drought watch” phase. Precipitation in spring of 2024 resulted in the basin moving to the “non-drought” phase on May 16, 2024.
- We will have a better understanding of water use in the basin and whether public water suppliers in the basin met the drought watch water conservation goals after data has been through QA/QC. We will provide that report in December.

### **Natural Resources and Conservation**

- Minnesota DNR continues to make progress toward delisting the St. Louis River as a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC) by completing large-scale habitat restoration projects and coordinating the AOC program with our partners at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
  - To date, 58 of 80 (72.5%) AOC management actions have been completed, and four of nine Beneficial Use Impairments have been removed.
  - Minnesota DNR is on track to complete our AOC habitat restoration projects by 2026.
- Minnesota DNR is working with State, Tribal, and Canadian partners through the Binational Program to restore and protect the Lake Superior Basin.
  - Minnesota DNR and local partners continue to identify, prioritize, and fund multiple habitat projects through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) that will advance the goals of the Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan.

- DNR and our partners have also received GLRI funding for projects that promote environmental justice by improving recreational access at habitat restoration project sites.
- Minnesota DNR is participating in the 100% Great Lakes Fish Project, sending Cisco samples to Iceland next week for analysis of water, fat, protein, ash, amino acid composition, vitamins, gelatin, protein isolate, etc. This will help to better determine how best to use the rest of the fish after fillets are removed.
- Minnesota DNR formed an internal Tribal Ecological Knowledge team in 2023 and the group is working to create guidance, best practices, and a cultivate a better understanding of TEK within the DNR. This group is exploring indigenous data governance and sovereignty, is engaging with other state agencies and tribal liaisons, and compiling a wide variety of resources for staff to respectfully integrate and acknowledge TEK in DNR work.

## **Education**

The We Are Water MN exhibit visited Duluth from February 29-April 22. Over 1,500 preschoolers, students, and chaperones attended over 35 field trips. An additional 150 people attended three events, including a water conservation panel for World Water Day.

## **Ohio**

Ms. Barnhouse submitted the following report:

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Water Resources continues to collect 2023 water withdrawal data from its 2,130 active registered facilities. To date, 90% of the facilities within the Lake Erie Basin have reported, and the Division is diligently working to collect the remaining delinquent data.

Using this data, Division staff began compiling Ohio's 2023 Lake Erie Basin water withdrawals, consumptive uses, and diversions to be submitted to the Great Lakes Commission by August 15th.

In January 2022, ODNR introduced its first online application for current registered facilities to report their annual water use electronically. This year, 1,700 of the 2,100+ facilities were reported online. Next reporting year, unless requested for extenuating circumstances, we will no longer supply paper reporting forms in an effort to become a paperless Program.

Water conservation and efficiency continues to be a high priority for ODNR. This year, our conservation webpages were updated with current conservation materials tailored to the different water use sectors. ODNR continues to accept and post submissions on

our Water Conservation Education webpages through the available online portal. This year, the Program will initiate a multi-division team to examine Ohio's drought preparedness. The goal of the team will be to centralize all drought related info and materials to educate Ohio's citizens and provide the tools necessary to manage water use in times of drought.

This year, the Program onboarded new staff to launch a Surface Water Program within the Water Inventory and Planning Program. This new Program will spearhead efforts to better quantify the availability and improve monitoring of surface water in the State of Ohio. Rivers, streams, lakes, and reservoirs are essential for economic development, recreation, wildlife and environmental sustainability, and more information is needed to determine the best practices and protective regulation for the effective management of this resource. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Surface Water program intensively studies quality related issues regarding surface water, and ODNR's Division of Geological Survey maintains a robust Groundwater Resources program to monitor the availability and health of Ohio's aquifers. With increased interest in Ohio's water supplies, developing a better understanding of this resource has never been more critical. The primary goals of the Surface Water Program are to expand surface water monitoring, enhance data collection and sharing across the Department, produce accessible resources for interested parties beyond the Department, and conduct new surface water studies in areas of interest and/or vulnerability to ensure wise management of this supply.

As Ohio becomes a leader in economic/industrial growth, the Division is taking steps to proactively forecast water needs over the next 30 years. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources partnered with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to complete a comprehensive water study in the central Ohio region. This regional water use study will examine water availability and demand, project future demand, provide regionalization recommendations, explore water reuse opportunities, and provide assistance when siting locations for high-capacity users. Hazen & Sawyer was chosen as the lead consultant for the study and it is projected to move region by region to complete a statewide analysis.

In March, Ohio EPA sponsored a bid to stand up Ohio's Water Reuse Chapter through the WaterReuse Association's national board. The board approved Ohio's charter, making Ohio the first Midwest state to join the national organization. WaterReuse Ohio establishes a collaboration with utilities, businesses, consultants, and academics to share lessons learned, best management practices, and new technologies. The group will develop an Ohio-specific WaterReuse Action Plan, including rules, guidance, and permitting structure for utilities and businesses to follow. ODNR joined as a regulatory council member with John Newsome of the Columbus Department of Public Utilities serving as the chapter's first president.

In 2019, ODNR shared Governor DeWine’s new H2Ohio initiative, which is a water quality initiative to ensure safe and clean drinking water for all Ohioans. The Governor, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio EPA, and the Lake Erie Commission, along with many partners have worked together to invest in projects across Ohio that will reduce nutrients and provide other long-term economic and water quality benefits to communities statewide. This program is a comprehensive, data-driven approach to improving water quality and is focused on reducing phosphorus, creating wetlands, addressing failing septic systems, and preventing lead contamination.

**Multi-agency H2Ohio Updates Include:**

**Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)**

ODNR’s H2Ohio Wetland Program is partnering with the City of Oregon on a streambank stabilization and wetland floodplain restoration project on Wolf Creek located in Lucas County. The project work will include stabilizing eroding stream banks, restoring floodplain habitat, and creating a new wetland complex. The restoration will reduce nutrient runoff and improve water quality in Wolf Creek, which ultimately discharges into Maumee Bay at Maumee Bay State Park. Additional benefits to this project include improved fish habitat and educational opportunities for the public.

ODNR’s H2Ohio Rivers Program will be partnering with 5 canoe liveries in the Lake Erie watershed to expand their litter cleanup efforts in 2024. Together the liveries intend to remove tires, refrigerators, bicycles, and farm implements, along with typical small litter items from over 100 miles of river.

**The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)**

The ODA recently announced that more than 1.8 million acres of farmland in Ohio are now enrolled in H2Ohio programs. The results in the most recent signup period show a 32 percent increase in enrolled acres compared to previous sign ups. Approximately 800 farmers in the Western Lake Erie Basin have engaged in contracts extending into 2025 covering nearly half the region. ODA estimates the results of this signup have the potential to reduce phosphorus loading into Lake Erie by 420,000 pounds over the next several years.

**The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)**

The OEPA announced grants for more than 30 municipalities and counties as part of the new H2Ohio Rivers Chloride Reduction Grant Program. The grants will help local governments pay for upgrades or new construction projects for salt storage and loading areas, and prevent over application of salt on Ohio roads to reduce runoff into streams, rivers, and lakes. Since 2019, Ohio Department of Transportation’s salt usage per lane mile has dropped from 22.5 tons to 9.37 tons – a decrease of 240 percent.

## **Pennsylvania**

Mr. Bruno submitted the following report:

Pennsylvania continues to implement the requirements of the Compact and Agreement through facilitating state and local programs on water use. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is preparing to assemble the Great Lakes water withdrawal, consumptive use statistics for Water Year 2023 for compilation into the Annual Report of the Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database. Pennsylvania currently has no diversions within our jurisdiction. It is expected that Pennsylvania's trend of annual water use in the Great Lakes Basin will continue into the 2023 Water Year and represent just a small fraction of overall Great Lakes water use.

DEP continues to maintain the Great Lakes Program webpages which include information about the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Compact and Agreement. Resources available on the site include the Pennsylvania Great Lakes Water Resources Inventory and Reporting document. Interested individuals can view registered water users within the Pennsylvania Great Lakes Basin and their annual water use from the 2005 Water Year forward. This document and other information regarding DEP Great Lakes Program can be found at the DEP webpage [dep.pa.gov](http://dep.pa.gov) and searching "Great Lakes Program".

In 2016, as part of Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Water Conservation and Efficiency Program, DEP funded the development of three free trainings for public water suppliers in the Pennsylvania Lake Erie Basin that focused on water conservation and system operational efficiency. The trainings were developed to integrate the American Water Works Association's Free Water Audit methodology and software, including in-depth material on leakage and pressure management for water utilities, comprehensive metering operations, and completing system water loss auditing. DEP would like to report that these courses continue to be updated and have trained hundreds of water operators in all regions of Pennsylvania since 2016.

Pennsylvania previously reported that DEP assembled a team of policy, legal, and permitting staff to examine current regulatory methods of implementing the Compact in Pennsylvania. As DEP continues a transition to new leadership, including the Pennsylvania Senate confirmation of Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley, the regulatory development team looks to continue with a potential rulemaking process.

## **Wisconsin**

Adam Feihoefer submitted the following report:

### **City of Waukesha Diversion**

The City of Waukesha Diversion completed their transition to Lake Michigan water in October with no reported issues. The Wisconsin DNR is meeting with the City of

Waukesha regularly to ensure compliance with the state and regional diversion approvals. The Wisconsin DNR will provide the first diversion report to the Regional Body and Compact Council in August 2024. Information on permits and approvals is available on the Wisconsin DNR website, [City of Waukesha diversion page](#) and Wisconsin DNR representatives are happy to discuss any aspects of City of Waukesha's diversion approval and implementation further with interested parties.

### Water Use

#### City of Waukesha Diversion

The City of Waukesha Diversion became operational in October 2023. The City diverted approximately 467 million gallons of water from Lake Michigan (467,534,168 gallons) and discharged approximately 489 million gallons of treated wastewater to the Lake Michigan basin (489,781,555 gallons), resulting in a net gain to the basin of a little more than 22 million gallons (5%). The net gain to Lake Michigan was a result of the City setting the treated wastewater discharge pumps to a daily volume slightly over the annual average withdrawal to meet the return flow requirement in the Council Decision. The Wisconsin DNR will provide the first diversion report to the Regional Body and Compact Council in August 2024 as required by the 2016 Compact Decision. The City's annual report to DNR and the DNR review of the report are available on the DNR's [City of Waukesha diversion page](#) along with information on permits and approvals. Wisconsin DNR representatives are happy to discuss any aspects of City of Waukesha's diversion approval and implementation further with interested parties.

#### Diversion Approvals

Wisconsin has three other diversions approved under the Great Lakes Compact for the City of New Berlin, the City of Racine and the Village of Somers. These communities are all required to submit annual reports to the Wisconsin DNR and they are available on the [Wisconsin DNR water use webpage](#).

### Water Use

Water use reports for 2023 were due to the Wisconsin DNR March 1, 2024. Ninety-four percent of these reports have been submitted to date, with 69 percent of these reports submitted online. Wisconsin has received reports on more than 14,000 ground and surface water sources. Wisconsin is on track for reviewing these data and submitting the water use report to the Great Lakes Commission in August 2024.

Wisconsin's 2023 water use was impacted by a flash drought in the summer of 2023. A wet spring and lower summer temps buffered much of the drought's impact. However, in many areas across Wisconsin, total annual irrigated agricultural water use was the highest it has been since water use reporting began in 2010. The Water Use Section will be releasing a full synopsis of the 2023 water use in Fall 2024. Some groundwater dependent streams went dry during the drought, highlighting the importance of continued tracking of these events to prevent future harm. Information on [water](#)

[quantity monitoring](#) and [water use](#) are available on the [Wisconsin DNR water use webpage](#).

#### Administrative Rules

Wisconsin DNR promulgated rules related to Water Supply Service Area Plans and Diversion applications. These rules do not change any of the Compact standards as the standards are codified in Wisconsin's Compact implementing statutes, but rather describe the application requirements and DNR review process for plans and diversion applications. The final rules will be effective July 1, 2024. More information can be found at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WaterUse/ImplementationRules>

#### **Administrative Reports.**

Ms. Stainbrook invited Peter Johnson on behalf of the Regional Body's Secretariat, to give an administrative report. Mr. Johnson reported the following:

- Thank you to the Buffalo State University for hosting today's meeting and the Science Team's meetings over the last two days. It was a great venue for our meetings and staff couldn't have been more supportive.
- Thank you to Sasha Karatayev, Director, Great Lakes Center, Christopher Pennuto, Research Scientist/Professor for hosting us. Special thanks to Susan Dickinson for arranging all the food, including the taste of Buffalo for our group and for making our meeting a Great Lakes Green Event.
- Also special shout out to Susan McCartney for arranging of the planting of a River Birch tree just outside this building by the members of the Regional Body and Compact Council yesterday. This was part of an overall effort to advance the Governors and Premiers' commitment to plant 250 million trees across the region over the next ten years. More information about the Great Lakes Trees initiative and Great Lakes Green Events can be found at [GreatLaketrees.org](http://GreatLaketrees.org).
- I would note that it was following December's meeting in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan that we held a dinner and symposium celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Lakes Compact. A recording of the symposium can be found on the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers website and I encourage folks to watch it. Thank you again for all who were able to attend and otherwise participate.
- We have updated the Science Strategy which is to be adopted by the Regional Body and Compact Council. A drafting committee created detailed language to include in the strategy, which was shared with the broader Science Team and then with Tribes, First Nations and our Advisory Committee.
- The Science Strategy's first year of focus will be on **Agricultural Water Use and Water Efficiency**. We plan on using that as our theme for next year's International Association for Great Lakes Research session and for soliciting speakers for our Science Team meetings.  
Future focus areas include:



**2026:** Quantifying Groundwater resources in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin

**2027:** Projecting water demands and cumulative impacts by water use sector.

**2028:** Tools for identifying drought and triggering drought response.

**2029:** Updates to this Science Strategy

- The States and Provinces are in the process of drafting their “every five year” Water Management Program and Water Conservation and Efficiency Program reports, which will be formally submitted in December. Those will be made available to the public after their receipt.
- The next meeting is scheduled to be a virtual meeting in December. Information on the meeting will be shared as soon as possible. A science team meeting is also being arranged for the winter.

Ms. Stainbrook then noted that the Water Use database had undergone updates. She recognized Mr. James Polidori of the Great Lakes Commission, who submitted the following report on the updates:

- The Great Lakes Commission is a public agency established by the Great Lakes Basin Compact in 1955 to unify the eight states and two Canadian provinces in the Great Lakes basin around issues of common concern regarding the Great Lakes water resources
  - The GLC recommends policies and practices to balance the use, development, and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes and brings the region together to work on issues that no single community, state, province, or nation can tackle alone
- One aspect of the GLC’s work is managing the Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database
  - The database is a binational effort to report on water uses within the Great Lakes basin
  - Since 1987, the Commission has served as the database repository and facilitates the effort to report water use data from across the region
- The Water Use Database supports the states and provinces in implementing Agreement Article 301 and Compact Section 4.1
  - These sections require each jurisdiction to develop and maintain a water resources inventory for withdrawals, diversions, and consumptive uses
  - All users with the capacity to withdraw more than 100,000 GPD (379,000 LPD) averaged over any 30-day period or diverting any water must either register or receive a permit for the withdrawal/diversion, depending on jurisdiction

- Each jurisdiction shall annually report this information to the water use database, and all information in the database shall be made publicly available through the GLC's Annual Report
- With support from GSGP, GLC sought to develop a new site featuring a modern design that will be more secure, facilitate easier maintenance by staff, and will better serve the states and provinces and the public by making it easier to upload, edit, and access water use data
  - The GLC sent out a request for proposals and contracted the Digital Industry Group (DIG) to review feedback GLC collected from state/provincial data managers about the limitations of the current site and any additional features they'd like to see implemented
- From October 2023 to June 2024, DIG evaluated the system, went through a user experience/design phase, conducted a development/testing phase with a select group of data managers and feedback from GLC staff, and is currently undergoing the launch phase
- Database upgrades include:
  - a streamlined, more intuitive process for water use data managers to report their jurisdictions' data and metadata
  - an improved public-facing "create your own query" tool that will allow users to create charts based on their specific data selections
  - enhanced security features to better protect data before it is published
  - a modernized feel to the website that more closely aligns with the style of both the GLC and GSGP's sites
- The updated database is currently being transferred to the url [waterusedata.glc.org](http://waterusedata.glc.org)

**Opportunity for public comments.**

***Members of the public were given an opportunity to ask questions or provide comments. No comments were received.***

**New Business.**

*Consideration of Joint Regional Body/Compact Council Resolution 2024-1 Adoption of the Regional Body and Compact Council Revised Science Strategy*

Ms. Stainbrook noted that the last item on the Compact Council agenda is the adoption of the Joint Regional Body/Compact Council Resolution 2024-1 that adopts a Regional Body and Compact Council Science Strategy.

She noted that as reported earlier, a great deal of work went into the revisions of the Science Strategy by staff at the States and Provinces, with important input from Tribes,

First Nations, representatives of our Resource Group and the broader stakeholder community.

She also stated that the revised Science Strategy will continue to help guide the efforts of the Regional Body and Compact Council as we collectively provide leadership to advance scientific understanding that can assist us as we manage the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waters, and that the Science Strategy will also provide direction to others within the research community, in both academia and within the federal government, as to what research activities would be of the greatest assistance to our work.

She closed by noting that this Science Strategy is being presented today to both the Regional Body and Compact Council for adoption and that it had previously been adopted by the Regional Body. With that in mind, she invite a motion for the Compact Council to approve the Resolution adopting the Science Strategy.

Mr. Freihoefer moved to approve the resolution, and Mr. Clift seconded the motion. The resolution was adopted without objection.

#### **Adjournment**

Ms., Stainbrook invited a motion to adjourn and a second. Mr. Bruno moved and Mr. Mueller seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was then passed without objection and the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m. EST.

The full text of the materials discussed at the meeting is available online at [www.compactcouncil.org](http://www.compactcouncil.org).