

Great Lakes Water Compact & Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool

- The League supports the enactment of SB 212 – which adopts the Great Lakes Water Compact for Michigan. This will help protect Michigan’s water supply for years to come.
- The League supports the concept of the Water Assessment Tool (SB 858 – 860) to correspond with the Compact.
- The League continues to have concerns with the Assessment Tool. The tool is a compilation of estimates, including estimates on soil maps, well database, and stream flows.
- A number of our Public Utility Directors believe that there is an inherent margin of error in the tool that is larger than the proposed Adverse Resource Impact lines drawn in the tool (the lines determine when a water withdrawal is allowed).
- In addition, any water flow that is returned from a withdrawal does not seem to be included in the data used by the Tool.
- Lastly, unused grandfathered permitted capacity (especially important for municipal water systems) is not figured into the data used by the Tool.
- These concerns call for a full testing of the Assessment Tool prior to its implementation. Many Utility Directors believe that the one year window created specifically in SB 860 is not long enough. Indeed, some experts even within the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) believe that at least five years of use is necessary to test this model.
- Therefore, the League asks that either a longer implementation schedule be used in the bill that enact the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool, or that a sunset be placed on the bills so that if there are serious problems with it, our state is not handcuffed from pursuing future economic development and/or our municipal water systems can continue to meet the needs of our communities.