
Great Lakes United



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Engineering Committee
Regional Municipality of Waterloo

RE: Options for Long Term Water Strategy

We urge you to retain the groundwater supply combined with intensive water conservation measures as the strategy for Waterloo Region's long term water supply. We also support further consideration of aquifer recharge as a possible backup option. We urge you to drop Great Lakes pipelines from further consideration as options.

Why Not Great Lakes Pipelines:

We oppose further consideration of pipelines from the Great Lakes because:

- 1) A pipeline encourages irresponsible behaviour by not putting enough emphasis on protecting groundwater from contamination. It is consistent with the mentality that we can write off some water supplies and always be able to find clean water somewhere else. This leads to less stringent actions to protect local groundwater. There will not always be somewhere else to go for clean water.
- 2) The Great Lakes do not guarantee a clean supply of water either now or in the future, regardless of which lake the water is taken from. A recent survey by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that only 2 percent of the 5,319 miles of Great Lakes shoreline on the U.S. side is "fishable, swimmable and drinkable." The situation is no better on the Canadian side of the Lakes.
- 3) Efforts to encourage water conservation will be fruitless if we continue to encourage the mentality that we can always find another source of water.
- 4) Piping in water from distant sources encourages communities to grow beyond their natural capacity. A provincial study determined that the environmental factor limiting the ability of the Waterloo Region to grow was not water supply, but the inability of the Grand River to absorb the increased effluent

from waste water treatment plants and runoff from developed properties if growth occurs. We must remember that water piped in ultimately becomes waste water.

5) This would be a very costly option to build and maintain. It also would involve the costs of a full environmental assessment. In a letter dated November 10, 1993, the Minister of Municipal Affairs said that a pipeline to the Great Lakes "would be subject to a full environmental assessment."

6) This is not just a local issue. We must not ignore the concerns of the people who live where the pipeline would take its water from and along the route. Considerable opposition could be engendered from such people. For example, the Georgian Bay Association, which has 6,000 member families approximately 500 of whom live in Waterloo Region, vehemently opposes any pipeline that would divert water from Georgian Bay.

Yours sincerely,



John Jackson
President

Great Lakes United is a twelve-year-old, binational coalition of 160 groups devoted to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem. Its membership includes environmentalists, community and native organizations, anglers, labour unions, researchers, municipalities and conservationists.