



SCOTT ALLEN

REPRESENTATIVE • 97TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release
Contact: Rep. Scott Allen

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Today, Rep. Allen giving the following testimony before the Public Service Commission regarding the Waukesha Water Utility:

*Testimony before the Wisconsin Public Service Commission
Case 6240-CW-117
20 November 2019*

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of the City of Waukesha's application for a Certificate of Authority to construct a water pipeline, booster station, reservoirs, and control building to transport Lake Michigan water to Waukesha. Although obvious, we often take it for granted in modern society: a supply of clean, plentiful water is essential for life and sustained economic growth. Waukesha was founded in large part due to its supply of natural spring water and its perceived therapeutic properties. Any community that wants to be a desirable place to live, work, or raise a family must maintain a safe, clean, reliable drinking water supply.

Today, Waukesha is facing long-term challenges related to water quality and sustainability. Groundwater is diminishing, and natural contaminants are excessive. The challenge is not new, and very little about this project should come as a surprise. The Environmental Protection Agency began issuing water quality mandates in the 1990s, and earnest debate about a solution began shortly thereafter. Ideas have been singularly focused on either increasing supply or removing radium, but this solution solves both problems of supply and contamination. After five years of review by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), all eight Great Lakes states and two Canadian provinces, leaders are in agreement that the city has no reasonable alternatives other than to be supplied by and return Great Lakes water.

Any public works project comes with costs. Along with the Waukesha Water Utility, stakeholders, and my legislative colleagues, we have worked to lower costs for Waukesha ratepayers to the extent possible. This includes taking advantage of federal law and extending the required term of repayment for loans under the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program. Since infrastructure should last for generations, extending

repayment terms over a period of time is both equitable and fiscally responsible for sustained economic growth.

Some additional costs are avoidable if we act now. Federal courts have said the city must meet federal water quality standards by 2023. Unfortunately, as I understand it, if the project is not at least 50% complete by May of 2022, the city will be required to install expensive equipment used solely for the removal of radium. This equipment will not be required after the switch to Lake Michigan water. Thus, a delay will only add additional, unnecessary costs for ratepayers.

Borrowing water from Lake Michigan is the most sustainable and economically feasible way to solve both challenges. The project's complexity makes it one of the most ambitious public works projects in Wisconsin's history. The years of review at every level of government has demonstrated that the project is well-deserving of final approval.

On behalf of my constituents, I ask that you approve the plans without significant changes.

Thank you.

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The 97th Assembly District includes portions of the City of Waukesha and the Towns of Waukesha, Genesee, and Mukwonago.