



Water Use Legislation Frequently Asked Questions

1.) What will this package do?

This package will protect Great Lakes and Michigan waters from being diverted or bottled and sold to other states and countries for profit—by strengthening public control of our water resources and passing the Great Lakes Compact. The package will also strengthen environmental protections, require large-scale users to adopt tougher conservation practices, and allow for greater public input.

2.) Some individuals and policymakers have claimed this is a 'takings' of private property rights or of individual ownership of water. Is this legislation a takings?

No. The public, as supported by precedent, controls Michigan's water resources. Michigan's waters are a shared or common resource that can be "reasonably used" but not owned by individuals. The 'takings' occur when for-profit corporations divert water from the watershed and affect public, reasonable use of the water. This legislation strengthens the public control of our waters—securing their sustainability for residential, recreational, agricultural and business use.

3.) Why focus on bottled water? Isn't it the same thing when water is exported in containers of pop, juice or other products?

Water is a public resource that cannot be owned and exported for profit, without the consent of the public. We fully support businesses having access to the "reasonable use" of water to make products, as they always have. It's important to make the distinction between water "users" and water "takers" to ensure that our water is protected and not privatized.

4.) Isn't this package a job killer?

No, it's a jobs protector. Michigan's water gives us a competitive advantage that we need to protect for the long-term. The Great Lakes and tourism are part of the lifeblood of Michigan's economy. People come here to hunt, boat and fish. Businesses will not want to locate here without the quality of life provided by the Great Lakes. Our water is our heritage and our culture. The Great Lakes literally define who we are here in Michigan and are essential to our economy—they must be protected.

5.) This legislation will ratify the Great Lakes Basin Water Resource Compact, but every state must ratify it for it to be binding. Will this plan really ban diversions of water to other states and countries?

As steward of the Great Lakes, Michigan has the responsibility to be a leader and ensure their future sustainability. We call on other states to join us in support of the Great Lakes compact and enact strong implementing legislation. Together, we can protect the Great Lakes for generations to come.

6.) Why not just ban bottling altogether?

The constitution does not allow us to ban bottling altogether. But we can create stronger monitoring and enforcement measures to make sure the lakes are protected, and that the public's interest in water takes precedence over that of private corporations.

7.) Will this just lead to frivolous lawsuits?

Citizens have the right to stand up to wealthy corporations that try to sell the Great Lakes off for profit and abuse our water resources. No corporation that tries to sell Great Lakes water illegally for profit, or ruins a stream through irresponsible use, should get off scot-free.

