UWM Faculty Senate Resolution on Strengthening the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact

Whereas, the waters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin:

- are an important public natural resources shared and held in trust by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence states and provinces;
- are the world’s largest source of surface freshwater and are essential to the economic health and quality of life of Great Lakes basin communities, citizens, and businesses;
- provide fresh drinking water; support countless family, commercial, tourism, and cultural activities for basin residents and visitors; drive economic development and improve the economic value of shoreline communities; support critical wildlife habitat and aquatic and coastal ecosystems; and support agricultural and industrial activities;
- are vulnerable because they are finite and are at risk of depletion and degradation with only one percent of the water in the Great Lakes being recharged each year;

Whereas, Wisconsinites and citizens of Great Lakes states have the right to manage the Great Lakes, and the duty to protect, conserve, restore, and improve the Great Lakes for the use, benefit, and enjoyment ourselves and future generations;

Whereas, the most effective means of protecting, conserving, restoring, improving and managing the Basin Waters is through the pursuit of strong, unified and cooperative principles, whereby Wisconsin sets a forward-thinking example for other Great Lakes states with strong policies, enacted and adhered to by all Wisconsinites;

Whereas, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact ("Great Lakes Compact") is an appropriate and necessary baseline for strong, forward-thinking policies to protect the Great Lakes;

Whereas, the Great Lakes Compact can and should be strengthened to better protect the Great Lakes and the Wisconsin residents whose lives and livelihoods depend upon them.
Whereas, The Strong Compact for a Strong Wisconsin:

1. Requires measurable, meaningful water conservation practices.
2. Requires environmentally responsible return of all diverted waters.
3. Closes the bottled water loophole that would let multinational corporations profit from public water resources by allowing diversions one bottle at a time.
4. Sets permit and monitoring standards for large water users within the Great Lakes basin.
5. Maintains the integrity of the Great Lakes watershed by establishing fixed community boundaries.
6. Assures an open, public approval process for diversion requests and provides public enforcement options.

Therefore, be it resolved, the faculty of the University Wisconsin-Milwaukee call upon the Governor and legislators of Wisconsin to quickly ratify the Great Lakes Compact along with passage of strong implementing legislation using the six points above and that the United States Congress approve the Great Lakes Compact so that it may become a binding interstate compact on the Great Lakes states.