

# Press Release

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## **Senators Basham and Prusi Help Pass Great Lakes Compact to Protect Water, Economic Resources**

*Senate Moves Forward on Guidelines on Water Diversions, Additional Work Needed to Ensure Effectiveness*

LANSING—Senators Ray Basham (D-Taylor) and Mike Prusi (D-Ishpeming), Democratic members of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Committee, voted today to pass legislation to enact the Great Lakes Compact and bills to institute stringent guidelines on the use and protection of the precious freshwater that defines our state. The Great Lakes Compact was negotiated over a span of almost five years with input from a variety of stakeholders from industry, business, shipping, agriculture, environmental and conservation groups, and all the Great Lakes governors and premiers. Senate Bill 860 to implement the Great Lakes Compact in Michigan is expected to be taken up in the Senate tomorrow, where Democrats hope to improve the bill's protection of Michigan's lakes, streams and groundwater.

“Democrats have always placed protection and conservation of Michigan's water at the top of our agenda,” said Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor), sponsor of SB 727. “The progress made today was important, but there are a number of significant issues we must resolve before today's action can truly live up to its promise.”

SB 212 is the primary vehicle for the Great Lakes Compact, which creates a regional council to oversee large water usage, bans large water diversions and stipulates the regulation and conservation of water resources, and most importantly for Michigan, develops rules for Great Lakes water usage from neighboring communities. Senators Basham and Prusi also approved the following bills today to add additional protection to the Great Lakes that surround and distinguish our state:

- SB 858, which increases oversight of municipal suppliers and other large water consumers.
- SB 859, which ups the penalties for violations of water-withdrawal laws.
- SB 723, which creates the Water Resources Conservation Advisory Council to evaluate and refine the science to improve and protect water resources.
- SB 727, which increases oversight on water bottlers and decreases the threshold

for how many gallons of water per day they can withdraw without a permit.

“The Great Lakes make for more than just a pretty postcard,” Sen. Prusi said. “They draw visitors from around the world, provide places for families, anglers and boaters to play, and are a vital artery for our state's economy. Today's legislation is a step in the right direction to make sure they remain protected and available for recreation and commerce.”

Aside from their expansive beauty, the Great Lakes account for billions of dollars and millions of jobs through tourism, commercial and sport fishing, and boating. As water becomes more and more scarce in dryer regions of the U.S. and countries around the world, scrutiny and desire to tap into the Midwest's water resources has increased significantly. Today's legislative action institutes strict guidelines enforcing the protection and preventing the over-consumption and abuse of Great Lakes water domestically and abroad.

The compact has been signed by Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota and New York and approved in principle by Ontario and Quebec. Michigan moved forward today, and the other three Great Lakes states—Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ohio—are considering it. In addition to approval by the states and provinces, the 27-page pact must be adopted by Congress. Senate Bill 860 to implement the Great Lakes Compact in Michigan is expected to be taken up by the Senate tomorrow.

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