Illinois' Lake Michigan Water Conservation Goals and Objectives

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Introduction

This document sets forth the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Lake Michigan Water Allocation Program Conservation Goals and Objectives. While the Department has had a water conservation program in effect for over 30 years, these goals and objectives have been drafted in recognition of that long-standing water conservation program and also to meet the requirements of Section 4.2.2 of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (Compact) and Article 304, paragraph 2 of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement (Agreement).

Illinois' Lake Michigan Water Conservation Goal

A U.S. Supreme Court Decree [Wisconsin v. Illinois, 449 U.S. 48 (1980)] limits Illinois' diversion of Lake Michigan water. That Decree also contains language that has been incorporated into Illinois law, the Level of Lake Michigan Act (615 ILCS 50), which sets forth the Department's Lake Michigan water allocation goal. The goal of Illinois' Lake Michigan water conservation program is taken directly from Illinois state law, and is stated below:

"The Department shall require that all feasible means reasonably available to the State and its municipalities, political subdivisions, agencies and instrumentalities shall be employed to conserve and manage the water resources of the region and the use of water therein in accordance with the best modern scientific knowledge and engineering practice." (615 ILCS 50/5)

Illinois' Lake Michigan Water Conservation Program Objectives

The Department's water conservation and efficiency program contains the following objectives:
Enforce the adoption of standards that require the efficient use and conservation of Lake Michigan water by the end user (homeowner, business/industry).
Enforce standards for good water system management and leakage control by the owner/operator of a public water supply system.
Ensure that Lake Michigan water diverted directly in the Chicago Waterway system for various purposes is kept to a minimum.
Collect water use data annually; monitor changes in water use patterns. Encourage public water supply systems to evaluate the effectiveness of their conservation efforts.
Prepare and maintain long-term water demand forecasts.
Promote the adoption of water rate structures that encourage conservation and water efficiency.
Encourage water suppliers to invest in water infrastructure and the use of innovative technology to improve water systems management.
Encourage research, development and implementation of water efficient technologies. Develop linkages with organizations such as USEPA's Water Sense Program, the Alliance for Water Efficiency and others, to keep abreast of the latest conservation technologies.
Inform, educate and increase awareness regarding water use, conservation and efficiency via newsletters and other such means of communication.

Work with our Lake Michigan water allocation permittees and our Great Lakes basin partners to enhance information sharing.

The Department's program to implement these conservation objectives includes both a regulatory and a non-regulatory component. Section 3730.307 of the Department's Rules and Regulations for the Allocation of Water from Lake Michigan (17 IL Adm. Code Ch I. Sec. 3730) spells out a number of requirements that Lake Michigan water allocation permittees must undertake. The Department will, through newsletters and other means of communication, encourage Lake Michigan water allocation permittees to consider non-regulatory measures such as conservation pricing, conservation education and information sharing.