

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION INITIATES REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY STUDY**

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has initiated the conduct of a regional water supply study for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. That study will lead to the preparation and adoption of a regional water supply system plan.

The Commission is the official areawide planning agency for the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region and is charged by law with making and adopting a comprehensive plan for the development of the Region. That plan is to include not only a fundamental regional land use plan, but also plans that address—among other topics—transportation facilities and services; utility and community facilities; housing; and agricultural, natural, and cultural resource conservation. The work of the Commission emphasizes close cooperation between the various levels, units, and agencies of government with oversight for land use development and with the responsibility for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of supporting infrastructure facilities.

In order to establish the need for and scope of a regional water supply planning program, the Commission prepared a document entitled *Regional Water Supply Planning Program Prospectus*. This document was prepared under the guidance of the SEWRPC Regional Water Supply Advisory Committee whose membership includes knowledgeable and concerned representatives of the constituent counties and municipalities, of concerned State and Federal agencies, of the academic community, and of concerned businesses and industries. During the past year, the Commission worked toward developing the funding

support needed to initiate the regional water supply planning program. That funding is now in place and the study organization step for the regional water supply plan has been initiated.

The preparation of the regional water supply plan represents the third, and final, element of the SEWRPC regional water supply management program. The first two elements, comprising the development of basic groundwater inventories and the development of a groundwater simulation model for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region, were completed over the past several years. These elements involved interagency partnership programs with the U.S. Geological Survey, the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and many of the water supply utilities serving the Region.

The regional water supply plan is intended to include the following major components:

- Development of water supply service areas and of forecast demand for water use.
- Development of recommendations for water conservation efforts to reduce water demand.
- Evaluation of alternative sources of supply, culminating in identification of recommended sources of supply for each service area and in recommendations for development of the basic infrastructure required to deliver that supply.
- Identification of groundwater recharge areas to be protected from incompatible development.
- Specification of any new institutional structures found necessary to carry out the plan recommendations.
- Identification of any constraints to development levels in subareas of the Region that may emanate from water supply sustainability concerns.

Two very important components, the evaluation of water supply sources and the specification of water conservation measures, will be done considering a full range of viable options. This evaluation will be constrained by the regulations and policies regarding the ability to obtain water from the Great Lakes basin, including the 2001 Great Lakes Charter Annex put forth by the Council of Great Lakes Governors

and now under consideration. Accordingly, it will be important to carefully evaluate the potential long-term use of groundwater sources for those communities located west of the subcontinental divide that traverses the Region (see map attached).

In addition, the issues attendant to compliance with the Federal and State radium standards for water supply systems are an important factor. There are 22 communities in the Southeastern Wisconsin Region—most located west of the subcontinental divide—where those issues must be addressed. In these instances, consideration will be given to options, such as treatment of the well water supply which exceeds the standards, development of new wells in those portions of the regional aquifers which yield water that does not contain high levels of radium, and well modification to reduce the radium. Sources of supply using Lake Michigan would be considered only within the spirit of the current and anticipated interstate and international regulatory framework. In all of these options, it will also be important to minimize water usage by the use of water conservation practices to the extent practical.

The regional water supply plan will be based upon a design year of 2035. A new regional land use plan for 2035 will be completed in the summer of 2005 and will serve as a basis for the development of the water supply plan. It is expected that the regional water supply plan will be completed by the end of 2006, with plan adoption and documentation following early in 2007.

The Commission will carry out an ongoing public involvement process for the regional water supply planning effort. That process will be designed to provide information about, and access to, regional water supply planning and programming activities; obtain public input; and consider public input when recommendations are made. All information developed will be posted on the SEWRPC web site: [www.sewrpc.org](http://www.sewrpc.org). Interested parties can also call the SEWRPC offices at 262-547-6721 for more information.

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**LOCATION OF THE  
SUBCONTINENTAL DIVIDE  
IN THE SOUTHEASTERN  
WISCONSIN REGION**

**SUBCONTINENTAL DIVIDE**

