



**Waukesha County  
Environmental Action League  
E-newsletter---April 2016**

*"There is no such thing as 'away'. When we throw anything away, it must go somewhere."*

*Annie Leonard*

**Moving Toward Zero Waste  
One Step at a Time**

By: Charlene Lemoine

San Francisco, with a diversion rate of 80%, continues to lead the way toward Zero Waste with a goal to achieve it by 2020. A number of other cities are also pursuing a Zero Waste. Austin, Texas plans to divert all of its landfill waste to reuse and recycling by 2040 and Minneapolis has a goal to reduce waste by 50% in 2020 and by 80% in 2030.

Unfortunately, communities in Wisconsin haven't embraced a Zero Waste philosophy yet but there are communities that have an important component of most Zero Waste plans, Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) trash collection.

In our state, Appleton, Eau Claire, Fitchburg, Oshkosh and a number of other communities have adopted various forms of PAYT.

With PAYT, households are charged either by the size of the garbage cart or by the bag so people who throw away the least amount of trash do not subsidize households that are "big wasters." PAYT significantly reduces waste and increases recycling giving participating communities considerable reductions in disposal costs. Municipalities in Waukesha

County haven't established any PAYT programs at this time. Another component of an effective Zero Waste plan involves a separate collection for food scraps. "Feeding America" estimates that 25 to 40% of food grown and processed in the U.S. ultimately ends up being sent to landfills and incinerators and that food scraps are one of most discarded materials in municipal solid waste. There are initiatives underway across the U.S. to divert food that



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would otherwise be thrown away to feed America's hungry from supermarkets, restaurants, institutions and businesses. Zero Waste communities also target food scraps by offering residents collections for composting. Diverting food scraps from landfills not only reduces waste, it reduces the generation of methane.



In Wisconsin, the City of Madison has a limited food scrap collection program in one section of the City. By the end of this year, Madison expects 2,000 households and 60 businesses to be included in the program.

Although municipal governments in Waukesha County have not adopted PAYT and do not offer separate collections for residential food scraps, we can advocate for these changes in future recycling and trash collection contracts. The City of San Diego's Zero Waste Plan recently added a separate collection for organic waste and will be increasing the city's 67% recycling rate to 75% by 2020, 90% by 2035 and Zero Waste by 2040. Adding an organics collection required the city to work with haulers and extended waste contracts that were due to expire in 2021 to 2023.

Educating the public to think of their discards as valuable resources is crucial when it comes to developing a comprehensive Zero Waste Plan. Planning for Zero Waste takes time. It also requires proponents speak at public meetings, write letters and encourage their neighbors to reduce waste.

In the meantime, there are steps we can all take to reduce waste. The first step is to evaluate your purchases. Think about whether the product you are buying can be reused, repaired, repurposed or recycled when you no longer need it. If we all think about the end of the cycle for the products we purchase, we essentially create our own individual Zero Waste plans.

Another step includes not purchasing more food than you think you will consume. If you have food scraps, consider home composting. Waukesha County frequently has workshops on home composting and composting bins can be purchased at Retzer Nature Center.

Once we start thinking "Zero Waste" we realize there are many steps we can take to reduce trash and every step we take brings us one step closer to Zero

...  
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## Privatizing water utilities poses dangers for public

Source: Journal Sentinel January 30, 2016

Water is life. Access to clean water is an essential human right, a notion supported by the United Nations General Assembly in a resolution passed in 2010.

As our nation's infrastructure ages and our waterways continue to be polluted, however, private, for-profit interests are scrambling to take over our access to clean water. It makes sense: There's plenty of well-founded speculation that water will be the hottest commodity on Earth in the coming decades. It would be an all-too-easy thing to profit massively from its control and distribution.

We are seeing the terrible fruits of poorly managed water utilities in places such as Flint, Mich., where the people are being poisoned by lead in their city's water and were, for a long time, misled about the extent of the problem by the state government and Environmental Protection Agency officials.

How did it happen? The crisis has been [well-documented](#). It stems

both from the systemic dismantling of good government and from the toxic idea that government should be run like a for-profit business (or its duties sold off to be run by actual private corporations).

Flint is a largely low-income and African-American community, a Rust Belt city left in the dust — and its infrastructure left to decay — when the companies that had previously employed so many of its residents left for cheaper climes in other parts of the world. Michigan's Republican Gov. Rick Snyder decided that the best course of action for solving the city's many and varied financial woes would be to appoint a

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series of emergency managers — people with all the power and no accountability to the people. Bad decisions were made in order to "save money" without any regard to the real-life impact it would have on the citizens of Flint. Seeing the lack of support for public utilities and infrastructure that seems de rigueur in modern American thought, perhaps it should come as no surprise that



private companies are making moves to step in and take over. Two bills introduced in the Wisconsin Legislature at the behest of such interests are being fast-tracked through with little time for public comment or pushback. Both bills would significantly weaken local control over if, when and how to sell water utility rights to private companies.

[Assembly Bill 554](#) passed the Assembly earlier in January and its companion bill in the Senate, SB 432, looks poised to do the same. According to [Midwest](#)



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[Environmental Advocates](#), which is working to stop the bills, "Current

Wisconsin law requires a proposal to sell public drinking water facilities to be put before voters in a referendum that must include information about the costs and conditions of sale. The procedures in current law are needed to ensure the public owners of these facilities know about and agree to the selling or leasing of their drinking water facility." Seems straightforward enough, right? Turns out that's too burdensome a process for private

...  
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....

companies such as Aqua America, which is pushing for the change. The bill would make the referendum optional instead of mandatory, and it would require citizens gather a certain number of signatures in order to trigger that vote, which would then take place before the actual terms and

conditions of the sale were made known.

The argument in favor of this streamlined process goes that these companies will be overseen by state and federal laws regarding water quality and treatment, that they will foot the bills for improving infrastructure and that their assets, especially in smaller communities, will drive rates lower.



If a private utility buys a municipal system, though, the private utility isn't doing it out of altruism — business is in the business of turning a profit, after all, and that's what it will be looking to do. That's why it's so important to ensure funding and support for municipal services, which are generally only focused on breaking even in their service to the community. It's an opportunity, as are all infrastructure projects, to

create and sustain local jobs and local control. Some things can't be left to the whims of a capitalistic system — water, being essential for life, must be included in that category.

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**An update on  
privatizing water  
utilities**

**Nothing came of Senate Bill 432 because it was not put on the senate floor for a vote. However, stay tuned to what might happen in the next session.**

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The privatization of water is a dangerous trend. We have to act to stop it and to bolster public accountability, control and access before any more Flints happen anywhere. Emily

Mills is a freelance writer who lives in Madison. Twitter: [@millbot](#); Email: [emily.mills@outlook.com](mailto:emily.mills@outlook.com)



**West Waukesha Bypass  
Fight Update**  
By Allen Stasiewski

Our Federal Lawsuit is making its way through the court and we hope to have more information on its status soon. In the mean time, we are continuing to fundraise for our lawsuit. We still need approximately \$3000 to reach our \$10,000 goal. You can help by donating any amount, large or small at [www.weal.org](http://www.weal.org). The DOT has millions! If we can raise just thousands we can fight them. But we need your help to do it! We have also filed an open records request with Waukesha County, Army Corps and EPA to get

communications regarding last years Wetland Fill Permit Application. We are

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**Please continue  
to speak out  
against the  
Bypass AND  
advocate the  
No Build,  
Improve  
alternative**

...

interested in learning why the permit was withdrawn after the public comment period. Please continue to speak out against the Bypass and advocate for the No Build, Improve Alternative along

the Bypass route. We must continue our fight against this out-of-control highway expansion! Help save our neighborhoods! Help save the Pebble Creek



Environmental Corridor.  
**Overwhelming Public  
Opposition Makes Case To Deny  
Waukesha's Application to  
Divert Water From  
the Great Lakes**

By Laurie Longtine



In an incredible response, citizens from the cities, towns and villages across the Great Lakes region

joined us here in Waukesha County and Wisconsin to make more than 20,000 comments to the Great Lakes Regional Body, the overwhelming majority of these comments

opposing Waukesha's diversion application. People from all across the Great Lakes region expressed their deep concern that Waukesha's diversion

application fails to meet the requirements of the Great Lakes Compact.

What goes on in Waukesha is no longer just Waukesha's business.

...  
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...

We knew this would happen from the outset of this long process. Once the diversion application reached the regional level, subject to review by seven other U.S. states and two Canadian provinces, Waukesha's decisions would be questioned and its shaky case would begin to crack apart.

- The cobbled-together water service area, consisting of existing City of Waukesha service area plus added-on chunks of Genesee, Delafield, the City of Pewaukee and the entire Town of Waukesha cannot pass muster as the definition of a "community in need" as stated in the Great Lakes Compact. (italics, underlining ours)

- A demand of up to 16.7 million gallons a day (MGPD) when the City currently uses 6.6 MGPD is excessive. The size of the gap between the maximum daily demand and the current need raises the question of what all the extra water is for.

- No matter how often or how vehemently the City denies that the application is about growth, evidence points to the contrary:
  - A city land use plan that stretches the city 5 miles south along Highway 164 to Big Bend, with plans for Bluemound-style development on both sides—big box retail, industrial and commercial developments.
  - A city planner's admission that the city intends to grow south and west.
  - The construction of a west side, 4-lane freeway (the Waukesha West "Bypass") connecting I-94 in the north to I-43 in the south.
- The inclusion of 23 square miles of rural and semi-rural lands in unincorporated townships to the west, south, and north of the existing city in the expanded water service area. (The addition of 23 square miles nearly doubles in size the current water service area.)
  - Inadequate water conservation, and failure to meet its own conservation deadlines.
  - Failure to fully evaluate alternatives including treatment of existing water supplies.

...  
**The only Regional Body public hearing was held February 18. Hundreds of people attended and most spoke out against the diversion except a parade of elected Waukesha officials and Water Utility employees who have staked their careers and reputations on a sole outcome...unfettered access to water via diversion**  
 ...

The only Regional Body public hearing was held February 18 at Carroll University, the final opportunity to speak publicly on the issue. Hundreds of people attended, and again most spoke out against the diversion, except a

parade of those elected Waukesha officials and Water Utility employees who have staked their careers and reputations on a sole outcome, and the businesses and individuals sold on the idea that unfettered access to water via diversion is needed to grow Waukesha County.

Of the other Great Lakes states, only two held public hearings in their states—Michigan and Minnesota. At the Michigan hearings, sentiment ran 8-1 against the diversion. In Duluth, Minnesota, not a single person spoke in support of the diversion.

In addition . . .

- The Great Lakes Cities and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, a bi-national coalition of over 120 U.S. and Canadian mayors and local officials, signed a letter of opposition . . .
- 23 Native American tribes registered their opposition via letter or passed resolutions against it . . .
- 100 elected officials of the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus, a bipartisan group from the eight Great Lakes

states and two Canadian provinces, signed a letter opposing. . .

- Hundreds of environmental organizations—local, state and national—also urged the governors and premiers to vote ‘no’ . . .
- Print and electronic media around the region covered the story. Most opinion pieces and editorials were against the diversion. A few were neutral, just reporting the story. We’re not aware of any that opined in favor. (Many of these articles and op eds can be accessed via the CIC website, address below.)

After working so hard and so long here in Wisconsin and especially Waukesha County on this issue, it’s gratifying to hear tens of thousands of average citizens, elected officials and organizations echoing the deep concerns about the diversion application we’ve been expressing to the City and WisDNR for years. WEAL, CIC representatives and residents from the Town of Waukesha testified at the Duluth hearing. Afterwards, citizens from Minnesota and northern Wisconsin





thanked us for traveling so far to share our unique perspectives, and for testifying that Waukesha's request

isn't reasonable and that not everyone in the city and the expanded water service approves of the diversion. These people sure didn't have all of the details that we've accumulated over the years, but they got IT—"it" being the big picture.

Despite the many and complicated details, this is

at heart, a simple issue: the protection of the integrity of the Great Lakes Compact and thus the Great Lakes themselves.

### **What's next?**

After the public comment period ended on March 14, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Regional Body – composed of the eight Great Lakes governors and two Canadian premiers – will meet in Chicago on April 21, 2016 to declare their findings. The Compact Council (consisting of just the eight Great Lakes governors) will meet again—after May 21—to make a final decision. Only the eight Great Lakes governors may vote on the

application, but significant deference will be given to objections from the Canadian premiers.

The Regional Body has released all public comments, which can be found on [www.waukeshadiversion.org](http://www.waukeshadiversion.org).

WEAL and its partners in the Wisconsin Compact Implementation Coalition (CIC) will continue to watchdog the review and ensure the consideration of

all of the public's comments as the Compact Council deliberates its decision.

The Compact

Implementation Coalition is a coalition of environmental and conservation organizations committed to upholding the tenets of the Great Lakes Compact. The Coalition includes Clean Wisconsin, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, WEAL, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters, and Wisconsin Wildlife Federation.

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**For Comprehensive information about the Great Lakes Compact and Waukesha's application to divert water, visit [www.protectourgreatlakes.org](http://www.protectourgreatlakes.org)**  
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...

Ed Hinrichs, PE Project Manager  
515 N Moreland  
Waukesha WI 53188

**RE: Proposed North Ave (CTH M) expansion**

Dear Ed Hinrichs, PE

We are longtime residents in the City of Brookfield living near North Ave. We would like to express our objections to the proposed widening of North Ave (CTH M) from 124<sup>th</sup> St to Pilgrim Rd and/or Calhoun Rd.

1. The main problems with North Ave traffic are the backups at the intersection of Pilgrim Rd and North Ave caused by trains crossing both streets. Widening North Ave will not alleviate this problem and the greater volume of traffic will only make the backups worse.
2. The additional traffic and road width will restrict access to Wirth Park and the bike trails by both adults and children living in the neighborhoods south of North Ave.
3. The proposed width of the highway including grading easements will destroy the value and quality of life of the residents along North Ave as well as many of the trees that add beauty and tranquility to the corridor.
4. The additional traffic and noise associated with a 4-lane highway is not compatible with the primarily residential nature of the neighborhoods through which it passes.
5. Brookfield already has two high speed four--or more--lane highways flanking North Ave to the north and south with Capitol Dr and Bluemound Rd. Brookfield does not need another super highway bisecting its neighborhoods.
6. Our elected officials espouse fiscal responsibility during their election campaigns. The expenditure of \$11,000,000 to \$16,000,000

of taxpayer money to solve a perceived problem that can be solved for far less expense than the cost of another four lane highway would show that they really believed in fiscal responsibility.

7. Repaving North Ave (CTH M) with the possible addition of one or more wideouts to allow for traffic to pass cars turning left will provide for adequate traffic flow and maintain the residential character of the neighborhoods.
8. The disruption of traffic and delays that occur during construction of a project of this size far outweigh the minute or two that might be saved in future years by having a four-lane highway for this stretch of the street.

Please reconsider your planning and remove this ill-advised highway from your capital budgets for the foreseeable future.

Respectfully yours.

David & Ellen Gennrich

cc: Paul Farrow, Waukesha County Executive  
Allison Bussler, Director of Public Works  
Eric Highum, County Supervisor  
Thomas Michalski, Candidate for County Supervisor  
Brookfield Elm Grove Now

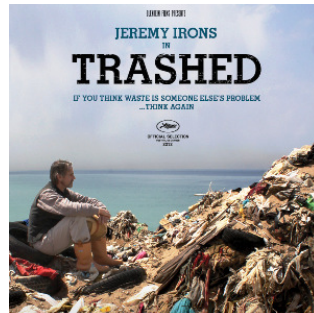
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Capitol Dr. and Bluemound Rd.**

**Brookfield does not need another super highway  
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...

**WEAL** is sponsoring three, free and open to the public, screenings of the award-winning documentary film **TRASHED**.



“**Trashed**” takes Academy Award Winning actor Jeremy Irons across the globe as he investigates the impacts to the land, air and sea from the trash we all generate each day. Although the environmental impacts are considerable, the film also offers viable solutions to prevent pollution, preserve resources and create jobs.

WEAL’s Waste Representative, Charlene Lemoine, will be leading a discussion and Q&A after the screenings.

### **Screenings**

<b>4/08/2016</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	Waukesha South High School (WSH) Auditorium Entrance 401 E. Roberta Ave., Waukesha <i>Co-host: WSH Environmental Studies Class</i>
<b>4/20/2016</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	Retzer Nature Center (RNC) S14W28167 Madison St., Waukesha <i>Co-host: Friends of Retzer Nature Center</i> Come early, seating is limited to 80
<b>4/26/2016</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>6:30 PM</b>	New Berlin Public Library 15105 W. Library Ln., New Berlin

**\*\*All screenings are aiming to be as “Waste Free” as possible.\*\***

Cans of soda will be available for sale at the Waukesha South High School and Retzer screenings. The Retzer screening will also offer complementary coffee so be sure to bring your reusable cup.

If you would like to bring your own non-alcoholic beverage to any of the screenings please have the beverage in a reusable, covered container that you will take home after the event.

Waukesha County Environmental Action League (**WEAL**)  
Email questions to [contactweal@gmail.com](mailto:contactweal@gmail.com)

**[www.weal.org](http://www.weal.org)**