



S.J.Res. 45 - Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact

FLOOR SITUATION

S.J.Res. 45 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) on July 23, 2008. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on August 1, 2008. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary, but was never considered.

S.J.Res. 45 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 22, 2008.

SUMMARY

S.J.Res. 45 resolves that Congress consents to and approves the interstate compact known as the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. The Compact will be governed by a Council consisting of the Governors of states included in the agreement. The Council will develop plans and policies regarding Basin Water resources, and this legislation grants certain powers to the Council. These powers include conducting scientific research and the ability to sell property.

Under this legislation, each State party to the Compact must report to the Council every 5 years on its water management, conservation, and efficiency programs. S.J.Res. 45 also establishes water management and regulation policies for the States affected by the Compact.

S.J.Res. 45 establishes certain dispute resolution and enforcement measures regarding compliance with the Compact. All meetings, public hearings, and records of the Council will be open to the public. The legislation also specifies that federally recognized Tribes will be consulted and notified regarding the Compact's actions and policies.

This legislation states that the Compact will become effective when ratified by the state legislatures of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. The Compact may be terminated at any time by a majority of the parties to the agreement.

BACKGROUND

The waters in the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin are interconnected and part of a single water system. These waters are simultaneously used for agriculture, energy development, recreation, and industrial applications. States and Canadian provinces bordering the Basin are concerned about potential future water diversions and consumption. It is believed that uncoordinated water usage would have a negative economic impact in the region.

The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact is an interstate agreement which intends to avoid controversies, promote cooperative water resources planning and science, as well as to facilitate data exchange, among other purposes. On December 13, 2005, the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers signed agreements at the Council of Great Lakes Governors' (CGLG) Leadership Summit, including the Compact. On July 9, 2008, the Great Lakes states completed ratification of the Compact. In order to become law, Congress must consent to the agreement

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has not produced a cost estimate for S.J.Res. 45 as of September 20, 2008.

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