

**Feb. 28, 2006**

## **Granholt Signs Landmark Legislation to Protect Great Lakes**

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today signed legislation that for the first time protects Michigan waters from large-scale diversions and withdrawals. The landmark legislation fulfills a commitment Michigan made more than 20 years ago to join with other states and Canada to protect and preserve the waters of the Great Lakes Basin.

“Michigan has been blessed by a bounty of water that fuels our economy and defines our character,” Granholm said. “It is our most vital resource, and its preservation and protection is far too important to be left to future generations.”

The bipartisan package provides an important framework for comprehensive water management in Michigan. It allows the state to manage large quantity water withdrawals of over 100,000 gallons per day and prohibits withdrawals that would have an adverse impact on the water resource. The legislation also requires all new or increased bottled water operators with withdrawals of over 250,000 gallons per day to meet high standards, including no adverse resource impact, no impact on riparian rights or common water law, and must address hydrologic impacts.

Granholm first called on the Legislature to enact the comprehensive water legacy legislation more than two years ago, and a bipartisan group of lawmakers, environmental, industry, and agricultural advocates, worked to craft legislation that both protects the state’s natural resources and the interests involved.

“The legislation we celebrate today represents the best of the Michigan spirit,” said Granholm. “The Water Legacy Act is the product of compromise, negotiation, and a bipartisan effort. It will benefit generations to come.”

Granholm recognized numerous legislators and nonprofit organizations, including the Michigan Environmental Council, PIRGIM, the Michigan Chamber, The Farm Bureau, and Clean Water Action for their work in making the legislation possible.

“More than 20 years ago, Michigan made a commitment to protect our water,” said Granholm. “Today, thanks to the hard work of many legislative and environmental leaders, we finally make good on that promise.”

In 1985, Michigan signed the Great Lakes Charter with the seven other Great Lakes States and Canada, pledging to protect the waters of the Great Lakes Basin from withdrawal or diversion. Until today, Michigan was the only state that had failed to pass legislations fulfilling this commitment.

Under Granholm’s leadership, Michigan has taken a number of steps to protect the state’s water resources, including:

- prohibiting open water disposal of contaminated dredge sediments in the Great Lakes;
- implementing the nation’s first laws regulating the discharge of ballast water from ocean-going ships;
- joining with other Great Lakes states in signing the Great Lakes Annex Agreements;
- renewing groundwater permit fees, allowing the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to issue permits and complete inspections for businesses that discharge treated water into the groundwater system;
- collecting fees under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to protect

our lakes and streams from contaminated wastewater. (Until two years ago, Michigan was the only state in the nation that didn't charge fees for wastewater discharge permits.)

The Water Legacy Act includes: Senate Bill 850, sponsored by Senator Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Township); Senate Bill 851, sponsored by Senator Bruce Patterson (R-Canton); Senate Bill 852, sponsored by Senator Gerald Van Woerkom (R-Norton Shores); Senate Bill 854, sponsored by Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor); and Senate Bill 857, sponsored by Senator Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor).

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