



Aquifer Dispute Resolution

- The aquifer dispute resolution process is the process by which owners of small-quantity wells address impacts to water quantity and/or quality from pumping at high-capacity wells.
- Small-quantity well owners may submit a complaint to either the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) or Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) by completing the Groundwater Dispute Complaint Form and the Water Supply Assessment Form available on the MDEQ website.
- A licensed well driller must complete the Water Supply Assessment Form to rule out any other causes for impacts on quality or quantity of water.
- Completed forms may be submitted by a toll-free fax number, 855-629-4337, or emailed to deq-assist@michigan.gov. Forms may also be mailed to:
MDEQ-WRD Great Lakes Shorelands Unit
P.O. Box 30458,
Lansing, MI 48909-7958.
- Dewatering wells, such as construction dewatering, mining, and quarrying, as well as fire suppression wells are exempt.
 - Owners of non-agricultural high-capacity wells can opt out of the aquifer dispute resolution process. In those cases, the impacted private well owner would have to file a lawsuit.

Types of Wells

- A high-capacity well can withdraw more than 100,000 gallons per day (gpd). This is equivalent to a rated pump capacity of 70 gallons per minute (gpm) or more.
- A small-quantity well has a rated pump capacity less than 70 gpm.

Investigation

- The MDARD investigates complaints involving agricultural high-capacity wells. The MDEQ investigates complaints involving other types of high-capacity wells.
- If an investigation confirms there is a problem caused by a high-capacity well, owners are contacted by the MDARD or MDEQ.
- Possible solutions include stopping or reducing the high-capacity well's pumping, lowering the pump in the private well, replacing the private well or connecting the private residence to a municipal water supply.



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- The high-capacity well owner may also compensate the private well owner by reimbursing some or all of the private well owner's costs.
 - Only costs incurred up to 30 days prior to the filed complaint are eligible for reimbursement under this program.
 - A complaint must have the Groundwater Dispute Complaint and Water Well Assessment forms completed and submitted.

- If the high-capacity well owner doesn't cooperate the directors of either the MDARD or MDEQ can:
 - Declare a groundwater dispute and order the immediate provision of an adequate supply of potable water;
 - Order restrictions on the high-capacity well's pumping; and/or
 - Order the high-capacity well owner to compensate the private well owner for eligible costs.