

Water Use Advisory Council

Water Conservation and Efficiency Recommendations

December 2014

RECOMMENDATION NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION
WC 1.1	Michigan should improve its water use-related data management program. This includes improving the quality of current water use reporting, the capacity to track water usage, the result of conservation measures, and the development of water demand analysis for individual water use sectors. In particular, each water use sector should design the appropriate data sets in order to track water use, progress on water efficiency and conservation, and develop demand analysis. Development of these data sets must balance the need to be generally applicable to a sector or sub-sector and the ability to be tracked over time with the complexities of the circumstances faced by each particular user. The state-specific outcomes described in Recommendation WC 5.1 can inform the development of these data sets. Ideally, these data sets could be recommended for Great Lakes Basin-wide use.
WC 1.2	Based on the water use trends, more focus needs to be placed on conservation and efficiency in the Irrigation Sector. MDARD has developed comprehensive guidance in the form of Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs), which includes guidance in preparing a water conservation and efficiency plan. MDARD and Michigan State University (MSU) Cooperative Extension should continue to provide and expand training and outreach to the Irrigation Sector to increase the use of these GAAMPs.
WC 1.3	The DEQ should incentivize water conservation and efficiency in the public sector by rewarding the implementation of water conservation and efficiency measures when applying for State funding for water infrastructure projects. This could be accomplished by providing significant points to project plans from water systems that already have a water conservation and efficiency plan, thereby increasing the likelihood that the project will be funded.
WC 1.4	Michigan should also enhance programs to address the supply side of the water equation. For example, the DEQ should continue and expand programs to support development of green infrastructure and review rules and regulations associated with the beneficial reuse of wastewater/process water/storm water to promote more development in this area.
WC 2.1	The DEQ should undertake a process to update the current generic and sector-specific conservation measures. This process should include direct involvement by multi-interest stakeholder groups and broader public involvement.

WC 2.2	Michigan should revise its water conservation program to: 1) further inform and encourage water conservation, and 2) assess and document the nature and extent of water conservation practiced by large water users. This program should consist of the following components:
WC 2.2a	Michigan should convene a multi-interest workgroup to identify existing and new opportunities to incentivize water conservation. This effort should target all water users and encourage conservation generally, the adoption of specific practices, and contribution to improved data collection.
WC 2.2b	Among the specific practices encouraged should be a water auditing program. For public supplies, the water audit should be in conformance with the American Water Works Association (AWWA), M36 Water Audits and Loss Control Programs. Water users should be encouraged to develop a water conservation program based on the results of the audit. While each water user is able to determine the nature and extent of its conservation program, incentives should specifically encourage a component on metrics for evaluating the performance of the program and reporting of results to the DEQ or MDARD. Providing information to employees or water customers on the water user's conservation programs and policies should also be encouraged.
WC 2.2c	To facilitate the above set of activities, the DEQ and MDARD should develop, or arrange for the development of, templates for water audits and conservation plans. These instruments should be considered by the multi-interest group.
WC 2.2d	The multi-interest workgroup should also be charged with developing a process for evaluating the results of the incentive-based system. This process should include metrics and data collection and evaluation methodologies. Ideally, metrics should be based on outcomes (e.g., volume of water conserved) rather than outputs (e.g., number of conservation practices adopted).
WC 2.3	Michigan should improve the administration of its current water conservation requirements. Specifically, the DEQ and MDARD should evaluate the efficacy of current requirements that farms submit conservation plans (if reporting usage to MDARD) and new registrants in Zone C self-certify compliance with generic or sector-specific conservation measures. The efficacy of these requirements should be considered with reference to the current lack of agency follow-up, the potential for and outcomes of actual enforcement of those requirements, and the opportunities provided by the incentive-based program described above.
WC 3.1	The Alliance for Water Efficiency Scorecard provides some valuable information on different tools available for addressing water efficiency and conservation in the municipal sector. However, it is not a good metric to evaluate Michigan's Water Use Program overall or

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	the municipal sector of Michigan’s Water Use Program in particular. The workgroup does not recommend its use as a metric.
WC 3.2	Michigan should develop Water Use Program metrics based on state-specific Water Conservation Program Goals and Objectives, which are recommended for development in Recommendation WC 5.1.
WC 3.3	Beyond metrics based on state-specific goals and objectives, Michigan should encourage the development of regional metrics tied to the Regional Goals and Objectives developed by the Great Lakes Compact Commission.
WC 4.1	Michigan should coordinate a statewide campaign and marketing effort to encourage water conservation action, or wise water use, across water use sectors and among individuals.
WC 4.2	Michigan should invest in hiring a marketing firm to conduct the necessary research to develop a common theme (similar to “Pure Michigan”) and consistent message appropriate to target audiences upon which sectors can build actionable messages appropriate to their client base/members.
WC 4.3	Michigan should tap into and partner with successful local sector and non-profit campaigns for examples of creative and effective messaging regarding responsible water use.
WC 5.1	Response to Comment: Michigan should adopt state-specific goals and objectives for its Water Conservation and Efficiency Program.
WC 5.2	Response to Comment: Michigan should be doing more to manage water resources on the basis of long-term sustainability, including consideration of climate change.
WC 5.3	Response to Comment: Michigan should include current users in programs encouraging adoption of water conservation measures.
WC 6.1	This report contains a variety of recommendations for updating Michigan’s water conservation program. When the program has been updated, a periodic evaluation of the program must take place to ensure its effectiveness and plan for improvement.
WC 6.2	A full program assessment and update should take place every five years, using data compiled from measurable objectives that have been established for each of the program components. This data should be gathered on an annual basis where applicable.
WC 7.1	Pursuant to the terms of the Tribal State Water Accord, Michigan should consult twice yearly with the Tribal Governments in the state to share respective progress on individual and joint efforts to manage Michigan’s water resources in furtherance of shared interests in protecting and preserving the Great Lakes basin waters. The discussion should specifically address the coordination of Michigan’s accounting-based water management program and tribal water management programs.