

2021 Dow Fellows Project

Draft Title: Advancing Michigan's Water Conservation and Efficiency Efforts through Michigan Climate, Energy, and Water Infrastructure Initiatives

Organization: Office of the Great Lakes, MI Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE)

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Draft Project Description:

Background: The state of Michigan is advancing new policies and programs to address climate, energy, and water that will also help to achieve Michigan's water conservation and efficiency goals and objectives established under the Great Lakes Compact. The Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and the Water Use Advisory Council's (WUAC) Water Conservation and Efficiency Committee will work collaboratively to identify strategies to integrate water stewardship into current and future climate, energy, and water infrastructure policies, programs, including innovative technologies. These efforts will support the WUAC charge to identify priority recommendations for improvements to Michigan's Water Use Program and Water Conservation and Efficiency Program. In addition, new environmental justice and clean water state offices are working to improve outreach and engagement efforts to address equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Focus: A Dow Fellows team will assess Michigan's current climate, energy, sustainability and water infrastructure policies and programs to identify specific policy and programmatic recommendations for integrating water conservation and efficiency into these current efforts. The overarching goal is to ensure businesses, industry, agriculture, utilities, communities and the public have the best available information, tools and technologies to engage in activities to improve efficiency and conservation of water resources to ensure sustainability of our water resources. **Possible additional components:**

- Assessing how new climate, energy and water infrastructure initiatives are addressing the State of Michigan's obligations under the Compact to sustainability manage the Great Lakes and achieve water conservation and efficiency goals and objectives.
- Identify gaps and opportunities to strategically integrate water conservation and efficiency into future policies and programs.
- Identify technological advancements to incorporate into water conservation and efficiency practices.
- Assess the EPA Watersense Program for potential Michigan adoption.
- Social equity for environmental justice communities or disadvantaged communities. For example, there is a currently a water leak pilot program in Michigan that is being launched in Highland Park and Benton Harbor to help reduce water leakage from water systems, reduce customer water bills and energy bills.
- Benchmarking or case studies of other water rich state water conservation and efficiency programs and technologies targeting major water sectors to identify specific programs that Michigan should consider adopting.
- Identify specific innovative opportunities to build connections between current and new policies and programs and technological innovations to create initiatives to promote education and outreach to different water user sectors.

Skills: Research, business practices, climate-water-energy knowledge, public policy, communication, marketing and persuasive communication campaigns.

Additional information, if room or add a link to [WUAC](#):

The Water Use Advisory Council (WUAC), established under Part 328, Aquifer Protection, of Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA) advises the departments in the implementation of the [Michigan Water Withdrawal Assessment Program](#) (established under Part 327 of NREPA as part of the Great Lakes Compact).