

# Water Conservation and Efficiency Committee Progress Report

In December 2020, the Water Use Advisory Council (WUAC) created the Water Conservation and Efficiency Committee (WCEC) as a standing committee under the WUAC. The WCEC advises and makes recommendations to the WUAC on opportunities to improve and enhance Michigan's water conservation and efficiency program and support sustainable water use. Efforts are also underway to assess Michigan's climate, energy, and water infrastructure programs and initiatives to identify opportunities to further advance Michigan's water conservation goals and objectives. The WCEC has developed two annual work plans to guide its efforts and hosted a speaker series for committee members to build shared knowledge on current and innovative water conservation and efficiency programs, practices and technological advancements to inform improvements to Michigan's WCE Program.

The Water Conservation and Efficiency Committee provides this report on committee activities and recommendations to the WUAC for calendar years 2021 and 2022.

## Advancing 2020 Recommendations

### 1. Advance Michigan's Water Conservation and Efficiency Efforts through State Climate, Energy, and Water Infrastructure Initiatives

- a. Assess current climate, energy, sustainability, and water infrastructure policies and programs to identify gaps and opportunities to incorporate water conservation and efficiency, technological improvements, other state and national programs, and education.

#### Update

In 2020, EGLE's Office of the Great Lakes sponsored a [Dow Sustainability Fellows Project](#) that included a team of interdisciplinary master's candidates from the University of Michigan's Medical School, School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, and the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. This one-year collaborative project was funded by the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program at the University of Michigan. WCEC members served as advisors to the Project Team. This project team conducted an initial assessment of current climate, energy, sustainability, and water infrastructure policies and programs to identify gaps and opportunities to incorporate water conservation and efficiency, technological improvements, other state and national programs, and education.

In early 2022, the WCEC received the final report from the Dow Sustainability Fellows Project Team on opportunities to advance Michigan's Water Conservation and Efficiency Efforts through state climate, energy, and water infrastructure Initiatives. The WCEC is working with state, academic, industry and utility partners to advance projects that address Dow Fellows report findings including public education on Great Lakes water conservation; accounting and measuring water and energy savings from water infrastructure improvements; and building public private partnerships with energy utilities to promote technical assistance and residential programs.

As part of this effort, EGLE is developing a project focused on assessing climate impacts on Michigan's major water sector's water conservation/business practices, and how water demands could change due to climate migration into the state of Michigan.

## 2. Increasing Water Efficiency and Conservation Practices in the Agriculture Industry

a. Provide funding for two Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions through Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) to develop and launch an educational program for agricultural water use efficiency for both plant and animal industries

### **Update**

The WCEC has made recommendations for efficient funding mechanisms to implement this commendation. EGLE will utilize existing contractual agreements to award a contract to build more capacity to deliver existing education programs and trainings on water efficiency for the agricultural industry including animal industries. Funding is provided through a new state appropriation to support implementation of WUAC recommendations in their 2020 biennial report to the legislature.

## 2022 Recommendation

### 1. Michigan Agricultural Irrigation Water and Energy Efficiency Program

#### Update

The WCEC is also submitting a recommendation in the WUAC 2022 biennial report to create and fund a pilot program to address agricultural irrigation water and energy efficiency opportunities through irrigation retrofits to reduce water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and carbon emissions. The goal of this pilot program is to expand and improve the implementation of irrigation-related Generally Accepted Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs) through on-farm demonstrations, including evaluating and retrofitting the existing irrigation systems, measuring the improved water and

energy use efficiency, and estimating the potential reduction of GHG emission and cost savings.

## Water Conservation and Efficiency Annual Program Assessment

Every year, pursuant to and in satisfaction of the obligations included in Section 4.2 of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, EGLE produces the Water Conservation and Efficiency Program Annual Assessment (Assessment) on behalf of the State of Michigan. The Assessment provides details on water conservation and efficiency efforts undertaken by EGLE and other state agencies. Previous Assessments can be consulted on the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Council's [website](#). The 2022 Assessment will also be posted to the website in December 2022.