

WISCONSIN ALLIANCE OF CITIES

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February 28, 2002

To: Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Environmental Resources

From: Gail Sumi, Intergovernmental Coordinator

Re: Support Aquifer Storage – SB 452

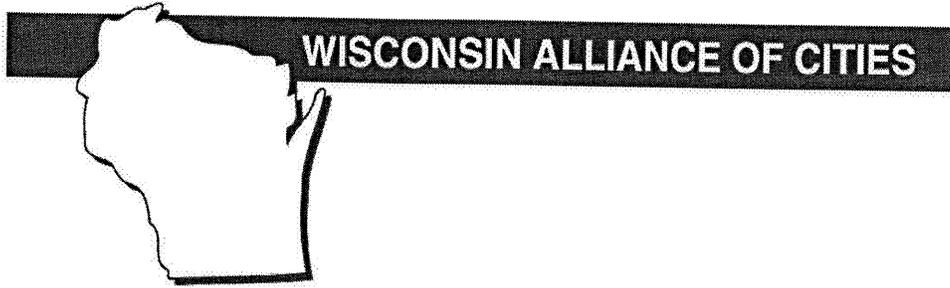
The Wisconsin Alliance of Cities supports SB 452, providing municipalities with a safe and cost-effective alternative to store drinking water. A successful pilot project is currently nearing completion in Oak Creek while Green Bay is about to begin employing the technology on a pilot basis.

The Alliance adopted the attached resolution supporting the availability of this technology at its meeting on November 30, 2001

Approval of SB 452 provides municipal utilities with an opportunity to use scarce financial resources efficiently while maintaining their commitment to providing the highest-quality drinking water.

Without ASR, municipalities are faced with borrowing for new treatment and storage facilities to meet seasonal peak demand.

We ask that you approve SB 452 and provide ASR as an alternative to municipalities.



RESOLUTION REGARDING AQUIFER STORAGE AND RECOVERY

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities represents 37 municipalities throughout the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities and its member communities strive to provide quality and cost effective services to their citizens; and

WHEREAS, Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) is a technology that could enable Wisconsin's municipalities to provide dependable and reliable water to its citizens at significantly reduced costs; and

WHEREAS, Aquifer Storage and Recovery will enable water utilities to accommodate peak demands without enormous costs in upgrading treatment plants and other infrastructure through a more efficient use of their facilities during non-peak periods; and

WHEREAS, Aquifer Storage and Recovery systems are known to be operating successfully in 13 states in the United States, as well as in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Israel; and

WHEREAS, pilot projects using ASR technology are currently underway in two Wisconsin communities, Green Bay and Oak Creek; and

WHEREAS, it may be necessary to revise the groundwater regulations in Wisconsin to permanently allow the use of this unique technology;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities urges the Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Board and legislators to expedite a revision of the State's groundwater regulations so that this technology may be available to benefit the citizens of the State of Wisconsin.

Adopted in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, November 30, 2001

Mayor of Green Bay
President, Wisconsin Alliance of Cities.

**Testimony of the Department of Natural Resources
Relating to Senate Bill 452**

**Senate Environmental Resources Committee
February 28, 2002**

By Jill D. Jonas

The Department of Natural Resources is committed to working with utilities to fully evaluate both the benefits and limitations of Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR). We believe ASR provides an additional option for reducing utility costs and provides communities an additional tool for long term water management. We have approved ASR demonstration pilot studies in both of the cities of Oak Creek and Green Bay. The city of Oak Creek pilot has been operating since the fall of 1999. The city of Green Bay is in the process of developing a pilot system and should begin the first cycle of testing within the next two months. The Department also established an external technical advisory committee to review the ASR technology. This review is running simultaneously to the pilots. We anticipate that the final report from the technical advisory committee will be completed in late March. Additionally, the Department proposed administrative rules to allow ASR technology in the State of Wisconsin. In the next several weeks, public hearings will be held on those proposed rules.

We also recognize the potential risks associated with ASR technology. We have significant concerns about the impact these systems may have on Wisconsin's aquifers; specifically related to the long term chemical and biological interaction of two different water sources within various geological environments. All precautions need to be taken to avoid future damage to the groundwater resource.

Senate Bill 452 exempts all regulated substances from groundwater standards and requires that the Department substitute drinking water standards for the design and management criteria for Aquifer Storage and Recovery Systems. These exemptions go far beyond the present scientific knowledge of the safety of this technology in Wisconsin. Based on our need to assure public health protection and the need to maintain the integrity of the existing groundwater law any exemption that you consider should be narrowly defined and specific to substances that are byproducts of protecting the quality of the drinking water. A broader exemption list could be viewed as a move to supplant the groundwater standards with drinking water standards contrary to the current statutory approach and department philosophy.

Our agency would like to continue to explore options that limit any exemptions to the extent possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Contacts: Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater

Jill D. Jonas, Director
608-267-7545

Lee H. Boushon, P.E., Chief
608-266-0857



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR
RICHARD GROBSCHMIDT

7TH SENATE DISTRICT

TO: Chairman Baumgart and members of the Senate Committee on Environmental Resources

FROM: Senator Richard Grobschmidt

DATE: February 28, 2002

RE: Senate Bill 452, relating to Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) systems.

I have been working with the Oak Creek Water Utility to bring about DNR policy changes that will allow the use of a water utility technology already authorized in 13 other states. The technology is called Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR). The technology involves pumping already treated drinking water into a well during times of low water demand and later recovering the water for use when demand is higher. Water utilities in our district hope to use ASR to substantially reduce the cost of meeting the growing demand for water in the communities they serve.

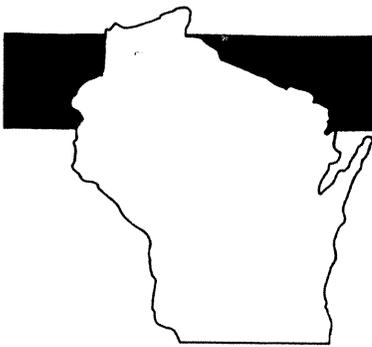
In addition to reducing the cost of providing this essential government service I see a positive environmental benefit in the use of ASR. ASR can be used to protect the quantity and quality of groundwater available in the more heavily populated areas of our state by giving water utilities a management tool to avoid the problems that are caused by excessive withdrawals of groundwater by municipal wells. It's for this reason, along with the potential cost saving, that we think many other municipalities may seriously consider using ASR technology as well.

The Oak Creek water utility has been operating a DNR supervised ASR pilot project since 1999. As Senators Cowles and Hansen will inform the committee, the City of Green Bay is in the preliminary stages of a pilot ASR project of its own. The results of the Oak Creek pilot project have been clearly successful. After several DNR reviews of the water recovered over time from the Oak Creek system, the utility received approval in the summer of 2000 to use water stored in the ASR system in its drinking water distribution. The utility has demonstrated to the DNR that it can not only retrieve safe and high quality drinking water from its ASR system, but also manage the system without harmful impacts on the existing groundwater.

Passage of Senate Bill 452 will be necessary for ASR to continue beyond these pilot programs. Although ASR involves the injection of water deemed safe for human consumption and that meets the state's drinking water standards, the process of treating drinking water results in the presence of some compounds at levels that exceed the stricter enforcement limits set by the state's groundwater law. However, research conducted by the American Water Works Association Research Foundation, and the actual experience of a DNR supervised pilot program operated the water utility of the City of Oak Creek have demonstrated that these water treatment residuals rapidly diminish after they have been introduced in the groundwater.

The DNR has also proposed administrative rules to regulate the use of ASR by municipal water utilities. Our intent in introducing SB 452 is not to automatically authorize the use of ASR in Wisconsin without DNR review and approval. The proposed rule changes to NR 811 will allow the department to evaluate whether particular sites are suitable for ASR and only approve those sites that are environmentally appropriate.

Because we think ASR is technically and environmentally sound we are proposing an exemption in the groundwater law for treated drinking water injected as part of an ASR system approved by the DNR. We share our communities' assessment that ASR could provide an alternative technology that assures a continued high quality of safe drinking water, does not endanger groundwater, and yields a substantial cost-savings to taxpayers.



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March 12, 2002

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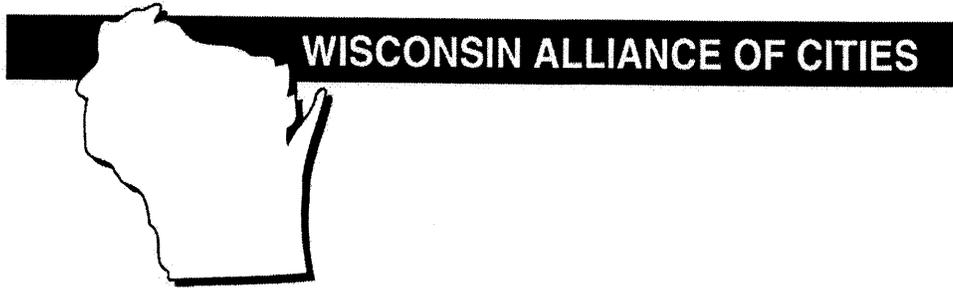
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ASR provides an alternative to municipalities who are faced with borrowing for new treatment and storage facilities to meet seasonal peak demand.

We ask that you approve SB 452. Thank you.



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