

**Racine Water and  
Wastewater Utilities**

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June 26, 2015

By Fax to: (202) 228-6965

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
United States Senate  
328 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**SUBJECT:** Impacts of Section 428 of S.1645 on the Racine Wastewater Treatment Plant and  
Ratepayers

Dear Senator Johnson:

I am writing to express my concerns over language that is contained in Section 428 of the Senate Appropriations Bill 1645. We are concerned with Section 428 of S. 1645, the Senate's FY16 appropriations package for the Departments of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency, which would prohibit any sewer overflows to the Great Lakes and its tributaries, and prohibit the use of blending by any direct or indirect discharger to the Great Lakes.

The Senate Appropriations Committee reported the legislation last week. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) is Chairman of the Subcommittee that oversees this legislation, Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) is the Ranking Member. The provision was included in the package at the request of Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) who has sponsored similar legislation in prior Congresses. The stand-alone legislation has never advanced prior to this.

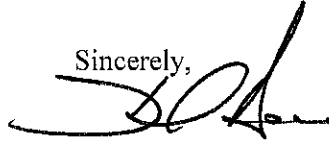
The language, as currently drafted, will cause the expenditure of 100's of millions of dollars for no appreciable gain in water quality or recreational enjoyment. Treatment plants, like the one in Racine, Wisconsin, have met their permit limits year after year. The ability of the Racine plant to provide primary treatment and disinfection of excessive flows and blend it with the treated effluent of the plant is a cost-effective and environmentally sound practice utilized throughout the country. We have always met our discharge permit limitations before effluent is sent to Lake Michigan. At a minimum, Racine would need to spend at least \$200 million to begin to comply and likely much more dependent upon how restrictive the final language would be.

This bill would make wet weather treatment of excessive flows prohibited even though Racine meets its federal permit limits every day of the year. Racine has a beautiful beach and there are very few beach closings. In fact, research of Racine's beaches indicates that thousands of gulls are the reason that beach closings are needed and not sanitary sewer bypasses to the Great Lakes. The effect of this legislation would be that only local governments, like Racine, which discharges to the Great Lakes, would be required to construct additional treatment facilities at extraneous costs even though we meet federal and state permit limits every day of the year.

From decades of research along the Racine coastline and Root River, it is apparent that the cause of environmental pollution and bacteria is not coming from sanitary sewer overflows or bypasses. To impose these unnecessary demands upon the already hurting economies and local residents of Racine and the surrounding communities of Caledonia and Mt. Pleasant would be the dagger to further drive businesses and residents away from our community.

We would strongly recommend that you oppose this language included in the appropriations bill and that you contact staffer Chris Tomassi, at Senator Murkowski's office as well as staffer Melissa Zimmerman at Senator Udall's office to express your concerns as it lacks merit and any positive impact to the environment. We would appreciate the opportunity to provide information in support of our request should the need arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Haas', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Keith Haas P.E.  
General Manager

c: Mayor John Dickert  
Senator Ron Johnson  
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