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## *For Immediate Release*

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### **Macomb County Water Resources Advisory Council offers solution to save drinking water monitoring system**

County Executive Mark Hackel's newly formed Water Resources Advisory Council met for the second time this week and agreed upon a set of recommendations to safeguard drinking water throughout southeast Michigan through 2012.

Nearly out of operating funds, the St. Clair River-Lake St. Clair Drinking Water Protection System (DWPS) was at risk of being dismantled. The council convened a team of experts from the Macomb and St. Clair County Health Departments, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development and SEMCOG to develop a solution for keeping the system online.

The result was a set of five recommendations that include having Macomb and St. Clair Counties appropriate \$50,000 each to maintain the program through 2012. In addition, each of the 13 municipalities that operate intake locations throughout the Lake Huron-Lake Erie corridor will be financially responsible for maintaining the monitoring equipment within their respective communities.

Pooled funds will enable the counties to continue to monitor real-time data and maintain public access to the information. It will also allow DWMS to convene all governing entities as well as other possible stakeholders to explore a new partnership structure and funding mechanisms for the future.

"Although not a long-term solution, this agreement ensures that the safety of our drinking water will be protected for at least another year," said Hackel. "It also gives us more time to develop a partnership to sustain this system well into the future."

DWPS is an elaborate monitoring network launched in 2006 with federal, state and local funds. It enables the 13 municipalities that provide drinking water to communities between Port Huron and Wyandotte to continually monitor water quality at drinking water intakes. The communities with intake monitoring equipment are Port Huron, Marysville, St. Clair, East China/China Township, Marine City, Algonac, Ira Township, New Baltimore, Mount Clemens, Grosse Pointe Farms, Detroit, and Wyandotte.

If a contaminant or unsafe condition is detected, an alarm alerts water plant operators to shut down intake valves or pursue other appropriate actions to prevent unsafe water from being drawn into the drinking water supply. In this way, the public health is protected from contaminants that may be accidentally or intentionally introduced into the waterway.

The decision to appropriate funds now rests with St. Clair and Macomb County officials.



Water intake facilities in 13 locations throughout SE Michigan. (Image courtesy of Macomb County Health Department)

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