



Tainter Menomin Lake
Improvement Association
PO Box 185
Menomonie, WI 54751

September 4th, 2019

Water Quality Task Force,

My name is Liz Osborne, and I represent the Tainter Menomin Lake Improvement Association as its president. Our organization participates in many collaborative partnerships with various groups and individuals, some of whom you have heard from already.

This is because water is a unifier. It united all of us here today. However, conceptually and legislatively, we separate water resources into ground water and surface water. We know these systems interact and it has become apparent we need to address their management holistically. TMLIA has embraced this paradigm shift, as it looks beyond the shoreline of our lakes out to the surrounding watershed, including the water beneath the land.

We appreciate the Task Force embracing a discussion on water as a whole, as groundwater and surface water are one resource. The movement of water between the systems means nutrients and chemicals are transferred and, for better or worse, actions on one system impacts the other.

The state does have established, yet separate, rules for groundwater and surface water. Nevertheless, having even the best ideas on the books won't solve anything without sufficient staff positions at every level to administer them.

The ineffective enforcement of existing regulations is less an example of bureaucratic inefficiency and more an indicator of the severity and complexity of the problem. Non-point pollution now accounts for 75% of our water quality impairments. However, the task of addressing non-point source pollution is practically, politically, and economically daunting. It is difficult to hold everyone, across all socio-economic classes accountable for their various contributions to pollution.

We expect that remedying our collective past indiscretions will carry a cost for all of us to bear, leading to the temptation to seek out cheap and quick, but temporary, solutions that are ultimately not sustainable -- financially or environmentally. On the other hand, the cost of inaction will be even higher and our legacy nothing more than passing the bill on to generations yet to come.

Our community's dedication to pursuing action can be illustrated by the number of attendees at today's event and hopefully that engagement will be reciprocated by our elected officials. The technical issues of managing our water resources is undeniably complex, but the more challenging problem will likely prove to be political. Therefore, we appreciate the tough decisions you will need to make in order to realize our shared goals.

Don't put this burden solely on the state. Reinstating local control allows citizens and their local governments, who have a closer understanding of the issues they face, the freedom to determine appropriate ordinances for their circumstances, and prevents the often-arbitrary designations made when averaging for broad, statewide standards.

Please do not have wasted the many hours you have spent at these public hearings throughout the state, nor the sacrifice and commitment by the citizens who gave comment. Listen to the people that gave up an entire afternoon's paycheck or spending time with their families. This topic is that important to us. We are telling you how to be good stewards of our tax dollars. Invest them in water quality.

Liz Osborne
President, Tainter Menomin Lake Improvement Association