

have state legislators on their own.

That needs to change, and Doyle can play a key role. Approving compact legislation won't be easy, but it's critical to the future of Wisconsin and the Great Lakes.

What must be done to push the Legislature forward on enabling legislation for the Great Lakes compact? Send a letter to: [Journal Sentinel editorial department](#)

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Editorial: Inaction not an option

The state seems to have stalled on approval of the Great Lakes compact. As one area leader suggested at a meeting in Waukesha County last week, that needs to change.

From the Journal Sentinel

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At a breakfast meeting last week of the Waukesha County Action Network, three area leaders called for action on matters involving water and transportation, among the most critical issues facing southeastern Wisconsin. Other area officials and citizens need to take up their call for action and start pressuring the state Legislature and local governments to act.

Today, we'll discuss the water issue; tomorrow, we'll tackle the suggestions on transportation.

On water, state Sen. Neal Kedzie (R-Elkhorn) pointed out that the state seems to have stalled on approving the Great Lakes compact, designed to protect the Great Lakes from several threats but especially from so-called diversions of water outside the lakes' natural basin.

Kedzie knows the importance and the difficulty of approving such legislation. He headed a legislative task force that worked on enabling legislation for a year but was unable to reach consensus. The committee nevertheless did important work in delineating issues and laying the groundwork for what needs to be done. Now, as Kedzie suggested, it's time for others to pick up the challenge.

On this we agree. It is, in fact, critical for the health of the Great Lakes. Already there has been talk on the presidential campaign trail and elsewhere that the Midwest should be sharing its water with the dry West and South.

And locally, communities are arguing over whether neighbors in New Berlin and Waukesha should be allowed to get Lake Michigan water to relieve pressure on the radium-laced underground water supply in Waukesha County. Those communities should get that water if they return the treated wastewater to the lake and if they put in place strong water conservation programs. Approval of the compact could help move such deals forward.

The compact has to be approved by the legislatures of the eight Great Lakes states as well as Congress. Gov. Jim Doyle this fall established an informal committee to look at compact legislation after the Kedzie committee dissolved. But the governor's group hasn't moved very far on enabling legislation, nor