

Great Lakes Compact Receives Highest Score in Recent Report

Saint Paul, MN – March 30, 2009 - Watermark Initiative, LLC (www.watermarkinitiative.com) has released a new report titled “U.S. Water Stewardship: A Critical Assessment of Interstate Watershed Agreements.” Watermark Initiative investigates, identifies, analyzes, guides, and designs solutions to water quantity and quality problems locally and internationally, with input from a team of Hydro Diplomats. Noah Hall, a Hydro Diplomat and attorney, authored this first-of-its-kind report on interstate watershed sharing agreements.

“Over 95 percent of the available freshwater resources in the United States are interstate in nature and governed by interstate water compacts,” says Mr. Hall. “As climate change increases variability in precipitation and susceptibility to drought in North America, interstate compacts will play a crucial role in addressing water supply risks,” Hall concludes.

Roy Weitzell, Chief Scientist at Watermark Initiative, generated 30 national and regional maps of interstate watersheds for the report. “It is critical for business and government leaders to recognize how water transcends state lines. For example, the Colorado River Compact starts in Wyoming, but includes portions of California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and all of Arizona. Some areas, such as a large portion of the Mississippi River Basin, impact numerous states but there are not any interstate compacts in place,” Weitzell comments.

The Great Lakes, containing almost 90 percent of North America’s surface fresh water, are subject to the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. According to the Watermark report, the Great Lakes Compact was deemed “adequate” in each of the eight factors which assess the compact’s vulnerability to climate change impacts. This compact was the most modern agreement analyzed and scored the highest overall for its predicted ability to adjust to climate change effects.

Overall, scores of the compacts were less than desirable and lead to apprehension about the ability of the U.S. to deal with current and future water needs. Adam Rix, founder of Watermark Initiative, explains that Watermark is concerned with the condition of these crucial interstate agreements and “aims to make stakeholders in government, agriculture, aquaculture, energy production, commerce, manufacturing, and tourism aware of the reality of unsustainable water management in the U.S. in order to facilitate a broad range of strategic responses.”

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