



# Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Mark Meyer, Commissioner

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## **PSC Approves Brown County Water Pipeline**

MADISON – Today the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) unanimously approved Central Brown County Water Authority’s proposal to build a new water pipeline.

“It’s clear these Brown County communities need to find a new source of water, since the existing groundwater supplies in the area have been drawn down faster than the supply can be replaced and radium levels exceed drinking water standards,” according to PSC Chairperson Burnie Bridge. “The pipeline will meet that need now and into the future.”

The pipeline will allow the Central Brown County Water Authority to deliver treated Lake Michigan water from the Manitowoc Public Utilities. About 30 miles of 48-inch water main would extend northward out of Manitowoc to the town of Ledgeview, generally following County Highway R. From that point, approximately 35 miles of smaller water main would connect into the water systems of the Authority’s member communities. Members of the Central Brown County Water Authority include Allouez, Bellevue, De Pere, Howard, Lawrence and Ledgeview.

The Commission approved up to almost \$140 million in bonding for the Central Brown County Water Authority to construct the 65 miles of pipeline. However, the Commission denied the wholesale contract setting future wholesale prices for the sale of the water from the Manitowoc Public Utility to the Authority. “Locking in these wholesale prices into perpetuity, with a yearly automatic increase, doesn’t make sense given the uniqueness of this situation,” Commissioner Bert Garvin explained. “Now, the Commission will have the opportunity to provide oversight on the wholesale prices.” The Commission approved the contract only through 2009.

The PSC worked closely with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in conducting a thorough environmental assessment of the pipeline project prior to the order and determined that the environmental impacts will be minimal for this project since it follows existing road rights-of-way. Today, the Commission ordered the applicants to follow special construction techniques that the pending DNR permits will require for all river and wetland crossings to mitigate any adverse impacts on the environment. The Commission also ordered the Authority to return with a plan for crossing those rivers with dolomite bedrock river beds and to hire an environmental inspector to assist on the project.

“The Central Brown County Water Authority pipeline provides the best alternative for providing residents in these Brown County communities with a safe source of water,” Commissioner Mark Meyer said. “The environmental impacts of the project are controllable and there will be future Commission oversight over the wholesales rates offered to the public water utilities to make sure that water rates in the area are as low as possible.”

The Commission will issue a written order reflecting the verbal decision made today at a future Open Commission Meeting. The documents associated with Central Brown County Water Authority’s case can be viewed on our Electronic Regulatory Filing System at <http://psc.wi.gov/>. Click on ERF System, select Search Electronic Regulatory Filing System and enter docket number 05-CW-101.

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