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# Protect Lakes — Blanchard

By Warren M. Hoyt  
special writer

Gov. James J. Blanchard has announced a plan to combat toxic pollution and prevent future water diversion of the Great Lakes.

In a recent speech to the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, the governor said defense of the lakes is entitled to the marshaling of full resources of Michigan and neighboring states and provinces, which, he said, must initiate protection measures rather than wait for the federal government to act.

He labeled the Great Lakes as a commodity that cannot be bought or sold.

"We can set out on two overriding courses of action — to develop a campaign that will eradicate toxic chemicals from the lakes and provide full restoration of our outstanding fisheries and to construct a legal fortress that will stand strong against any attempt to divert Great Lakes water," he said.

THE GOVERNOR said he is asking for swift approval by the legislature of a short-term ban on major diversion of Great Lakes water, which would be succeeded by a larger water policy by 1987 for conserving, managing and using the water.

Blanchard said that would be part of building a legal case that diverting water would be unreasonable, contrary to conservation and detrimental to public welfare.

He also designated Attorney General Frank Kelley to chair a task force to gather information for a legal case.

The governor said he also wants language in the Great Lakes agreement giving Michigan a say in all proposed diversions, including those within the Great Lakes basin in other states. He said he would seek a forum for bringing together all lakes interests to address common problems.

Blanchard added he is taking several steps to identify and combat toxic chemicals in the lakes. These include a request that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) develop a strategy to identify sources of airborne chemicals and recommending pollution abatement measures and to develop a strategy to clean as many as 39 areas of key toxic chemical pollution and other areas of impaired use along the lakes.

HE ASKED the Department of Public Health to renew research on the health effects of eating contaminated fish, while the Natural Resources Commission is to recommend a program to test and analyze fish as a barometer of contamination trends.

The governor said he is directing environmental agencies to place a priority on identifying point sources of toxic discharges and gather evidence if they are in violation of existing laws or permits so the attorney general may take action.

To continue development of the lakes as an economic and recreational resource, the governor said the DNR would coordinate more varied fish plantings, and target funds on specific species with the best chance of permanent reproduction.

Hoyt is executive director of the Michigan Press Association.

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