



# Finders Keepers: The Controversial Exportation of the Great Lakes

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## Introduction

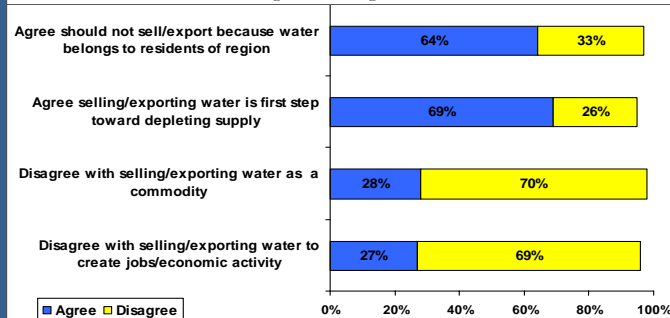
From 1970-2000, the volume of water bottled and traded worldwide increased from 300 million gallons per year to 22.3 billion gallons per year. The demand for clean water has skyrocketed, with many people pushing to have some of the 20% of the world's fresh water located in the Great Lakes exported to meet these demands. Many feel that the Great Lakes do not have adequate protection from those who would like to export it in bulk quantities of bottled water.

This poster is to inform the reader of the debate between water preservation and consumption.

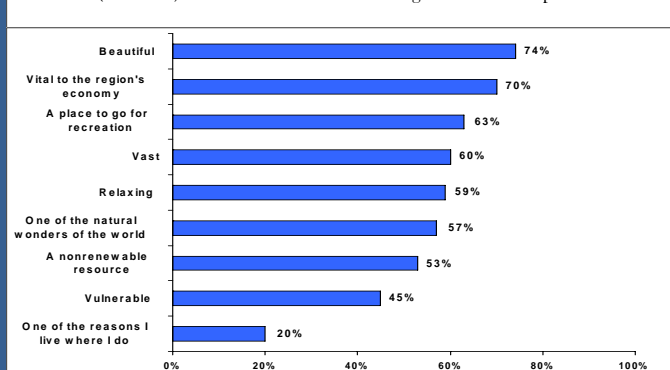
## Public Opinion

Belden Russonello & Stewart Research and Communications conducted a survey of 1,539 adults by telephone in July of 2002 for the Biodiversity Project and the Joyce Foundation of the public opinion in the Great Lake states. (Charts 1, 2, 3)

(Chart 1.) % agree or disagree with statement



(Chart 2.) The Great Lakes Are... % agree with description



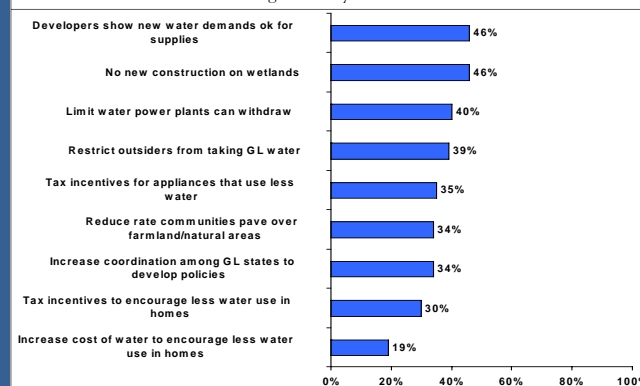
Graphic provided by: Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network and Fund

## Ecological Effects

Lower water levels can effect the Ecosystem of the lakes as well as the land surrounding them. Increased shoreline and shallower waters will have a negative impact on the aquatic ecosystems.

Less water in the lakes may have effects on the weather and climate of the Great Lake States by an increase in temperature because of the decrease in surface area. A smaller volume of water heats up faster than a large volume. While it may not be a drastic change immediately, in time it could significantly change forest composition and wildlife diversity.

(Chart 3.) Specific Government Policies Seen As Effective % agree "very effective"



## Economic Value

The states surrounding the Great Lakes, especially Michigan, rely heavily on the lakes for economic value and regional identity. They provide for recreation uses such as fishing and boating, drawing in many tourists throughout the year who enjoy the incredible vastness of the lakes. This brings in a good amount of money for the local economies located in the GL states.

According to the EPA, the annual value of the commercial and sport fishery is estimated at over \$4.5 billion

## The Great Debate

❖ Nestle spokesman Brian Flaherty said the industry (bottled water) is being unfairly singled out, since it is only one of many commercial sectors that use and export water. "More Great Lakes region water goes into soda and beer cans" he said. "How do you define a product?" he asked. "Water goes into beer in Wisconsin and radiators in Detroit. Why would you have a separate standard for bottled water versus soda?"

❖ Opponents of bottled water retaliate by saying soda and beer are different because the water is consumed in making something else, whereas they view Nestle as taking a public good, paying very little for it, and making a profit on it.

❖ "As long as the bottled-water loophole remains, it's a gaping hole in the Great Lakes Compact that would lead to potentially sucking the Great Lakes dry," -Meera Karunanathan, national water campaigner for the Council of Canadians (a citizen group).

❖ Millions of people die each year from lack of clean water, should billions of gallons be exported to help prevent dirty water related deaths?

❖ Sustainability is crucial to ensure clean water for future generations "The bottled water industry is privatizing a public good and harming the environment."

❖ Only 1% of the 20% of the world's surface freshwater (the Great Lakes) is renewed each year.

## Acknowledgements:

- ❖ Great Lakes Directory
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