



March 7th, 2024

To the Board of GLUA:

On behalf of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, we thank you for including MRWA in the ongoing discussions relative to the environmental improvements proposed for Higgins Lake in Roscommon County over the past three years.

This letter is to affirm and reiterate MRWA's ongoing commitment to assisting GLUA in its pursuit of funding for the construction of a new Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and low-pressure collection system to preserve the water quality of Higgins Lake and address failed septic systems in the surrounding area.

It is the professional opinion of MRWA's staff and Board that the GLUA's initiative is of utmost importance to the watershed given that Higgins Lake is the headwater source of the Muskegon River. The present water quality condition merits immediate remedial action to prevent downstream effects of eutrophication, elevated bacteria levels, and nutrients that change and threaten the ecology and human health in the watershed. The proposed sewage waste treatment system is an important and proven tool in protecting lake and watershed resources from these pollutants.

As you may know, the Muskegon River ends in Muskegon Lake, a drowned river-mouth system that drains directly to Lake Michigan. In 1985, the water quality in this area was so degraded that the Environmental Protection Agency designated it an Area of Concern under the US-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Restoration initiatives have resulted in improvement to water quality and habitats, but the increasing levels of pollution upstream threaten that progress.

Given the size and broader impact of the Higgins Lake project – to the entire Muskegon River Watershed and the Great Lakes – federal funding is needed in addition to more limited state and private resources. We support GLUA's federal funding requests in order to preserve these natural resources, protect public health, and maintain the economic vitality of the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Faulkner".

Scott D. Faulkner, Executive Director
Muskegon River Watershed Assembly
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