

JAN 22 2024

Neice, Jessica

**From:** Meilan, Richard <rmeilan@purdue.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 21, 2024 3:27 PM  
**To:** Azar, George; DeBaun, Curtis; Boland, Tammy; Auler, Amy; Elliott, Earl; Nation, Todd; Garrison, Neil; Loudermilk, Cheryl; Crossen, Martha; Edwards, Michelle  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL -LEAP pipeline  
**Attachments:** Monticello Res 2023-27 LEAP.pdf

CITY CLERK

**\*\*External Email. - Think Before You Click\*\*** --  
*Help Desk*

Dear Terre Haute City Council:

As a concerned citizen, I am writing to inform you of actions which have been taken that directly affect you and your constituents. If you are already familiar with this issue and are in the process of taking a stand, please don't be offended by what I have written below. I am continually surprised by how little is known about this matter outside of the greater Lafayette area.

A quasi-governmental entity, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC); its sister-organization, the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA); and the Limitless Exploration/Advanced Pace (LEAP) project managers are moving forward with plans to install twin 4-foot diameter pipelines to transport up to 100 million gallons per day (MGD) of groundwater pumped from the Teays and Wabash Alluvial aquifers, which are not only connected to each other, but also to the Wabash River. These dual pipelines are being planned to extend >35 miles to serve more than 9,000 acres of recently purchased farmland that was annexed and rezoned for industrial use in Lebanon, IN. This water will not be returned to the source aquifer.<sup>1</sup>

It's difficult to visualize how much 100 million gallons represents. To do so, first, imagine an area the size of a standard football field, which is 100 yards (300 feet) long, without the end zones, and 50 yards (150 feet) wide. Next, fill that area to a height equivalent to the length of a football field (330 feet).<sup>2</sup> That is roughly 100 million gallons. Now imagine pumping that volume every day!

Here's why you should care: As a result of the proposed LEAP project, legislation is being drafted that will affect your property and the properties of your constituents. The legislature is considering charging large water users (e.g., power companies, industrial processers, public supply, and agricultural users) to fund additional wells. As a result, your water rates and your constituents' bills are expected to increase. In addition, if this aquifer plundering moves forward, your community's right to water in the aquifer underlying it will be at risk. Moreover, every community being starved of the taxpayer dollars, which are currently being poured into Lebanon, has a vested interest in the outcome. The funds allocated to property acquisition and pipeline construction [estimated to be \$2 billion, at a minimum] would better serve Hoosiers by restoring Indiana's watersheds (with wetlands and forests) and revitalizing aging industrial zones, both of which would stimulate the economy statewide.

Test wells installed in Tippecanoe County (three wells, each capable of pumping at least 2 MGD) have already contaminated the water in the area with hydrogen sulfide and relocated gravel, sand, and other particulates, while also reducing water pressure.<sup>3</sup> Additional test wells are being planned. Moreover, as the amount of pumping increases, there is a very real concern for subsidence and aquifer depletion. Using their "preliminary results", the project managers only speak to water-quantity impacts, with little concern for the effects on quality. They also do not address impacts to local farmers, aquifer recharge rates, seasonal droughts, future development along the aquifer, or other long-term effects.

Matt Gentry, the mayor of the Lebanon, site of the LEAP industrial park, previously served on an Indiana water task force. He has claimed that: "Water is a State's resource, and we have to make a determination as a State of how we use it appropriately, and every day water flows by Lafayette and West Lafayette that they are not



using, and it goes to Illinois, so I would rather Indiana used it and not Illinois.”<sup>4</sup> In short, Governor Holcomb, the IEDC, and Mayor Gentry desire to take potable water from dependent communities, in order to attract businesses to a massive, controversial industrial park. Furthermore, should the water source dry up, IEDC/LEAP’s plan is to open dams upstream.

In your Oath of Office, you promised to uphold the constitutions of the United States of America and of Indiana. I believe that these documents protect the human rights derived from property. The only limitation to an individual’s rights is denying the rights of others, who are equally entitled. Given this, one cannot deny another property owner access to groundwater. The LEAP project will infringe on the rights of others by reducing the quantity and quality of their groundwater, and possibly compromising the integrity of foundations supporting structures, and is therefore unconstitutional. Furthermore, Indiana’s public policy is to conserve and protect the groundwater resources for the most beneficial use. The “most beneficial use” is not to attract a semiconductor plant to a county where the water it needs is unavailable, when other counties have adequate resources. Nor does the “most beneficial use” require the installation of a 35+ mile long pipeline, to pilfer millions of gallons of water from an aquifer so much of the state is dependent on. These actions represent our government’s callous disregard for local farmers whose livelihoods depend upon their costly irrigation investments, and to all residents who fear sinkholes, not to mention a reduction in their property values.

Finally, why is a disproportionate amount of taxpayer money going to Lebanon? Why not distribute it equitably? Why not reserve money for other communities by picking a sustainable location for the semiconductor plant (saving the cost of land acquisition, pipelines, booster stations, etc.)? Why not reimagine/redevelop existing vacant and/or abandoned industrial land? Why not preserve and protect Indiana’s food production (agriculture) and water, while revitalizing our statewide industrial zones? Why not use taxpayer dollars to correct Indiana’s growing watershed deterioration crisis, with responsible restoration and/or establishment of wetlands and forests within the watershed, instead of adding to the embarrassment? Why not return some of the extracted water to the original source to help recharge the aquifer? The Governor, IEDC, and IFA are not being good stewards of your constituents’ tax dollars, or their supply of water and food. In a statement released by Secretary of Commerce David Rosenberg regarding the project’s move from the IEDC to the IFA, he said that he intended to launch the project “into the execution phase...help keep Indiana’s foot on the gas...”.

I believe it is your duty to protect your constituents today, knowing this project impacts a property owner’s right to groundwater and has huge implications for the future. It also sets a bad precedent for what the State is willing to support the IEDC doing with our tax dollars. Your stance will be your legacy.

Please join your neighbors to fight this project. Take a stand with Attica, Battleground, Covington, Lafayette, Monticello, Otterbein, Shadeland, Terra Haute, West Lafayette, Fountain County, Miami County, Tippecanoe County, and White County by publicly denouncing groundwater diversion, this IEDC/LEAP project, and their deplorable misuse of taxpayer dollars. Here’s how you can help:

1. Personally, by signing the petition and share with your network (click link below).  
[Petition · Stop the LEAP Pipeline: Protect Our Aquifer, Preserve Our Water! · Change.org](#)
2. Personally, by notifying your State Senator and Representatives, to let them know you are opposed to the LEAP project pipeline.
3. Publicly, by joining the communities listed above and opposing groundwater diversion, and this project. (An example resolution is attached to this e-mail message.)

To reiterate a quote from Mayor Gentry: “...we have to make a determination as a State of how we use it [water] appropriately.” It is imperative that you, as an elected official, be a part of a united chorus that can drown out the voices of Governor Holcomb and Mayor Gentry. As representatives of the people, you have been charged with the duty to preserve the rights of your constituents. Please uphold your Oath of Office by helping to protect our communities from this groundwater diversion.

Respectfully yours,

Richard Meilan, Ph.D.  
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<sup>1</sup> <https://secure.in.gov/apps/iedc/transparencyportal/viewtaxgrantloancontract/5ac468f49792ed11aad1001dd806af48>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.basedinlafayette.com/p/purdue-groundwater-expert-on-leap?utm\\_campaign=email-post&r=32aex2&utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.basedinlafayette.com/p/purdue-groundwater-expert-on-leap?utm_campaign=email-post&r=32aex2&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RslZCQ61YAc> (or search LEAP Project Concerned Citizens Meeting on the “We the People Indiana Revival” YouTube channel, this is the most recent public forum)

<sup>4</sup> [Leaders of Wabash River city question who owns Indiana's water - Indianapolis News | Indiana Weather | Indiana Traffic | WISH-TV | \(wishtv.com\)](#)



**RESOLUTION NO. 2023- 27**

**MONTICELLO CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OPPOSING  
THE LEAP PIPELINE WATER DIVERSION PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (the "IEDC") has planned a "LEAP (Limitless Exploration/Advanced Pace) Innovation District" located on more than 9,000 acres in Boone County without ensuring sufficient water resources were available for the businesses and industries to be recruited for locating in the Leap Innovation District; and,

WHEREAS, the IEDC has commenced construction planning of a pipeline to divert as much as 100 million gallons of water per day from aquifers connected to the Wabash River in Tippecanoe County to the LEAP Innovation District; and

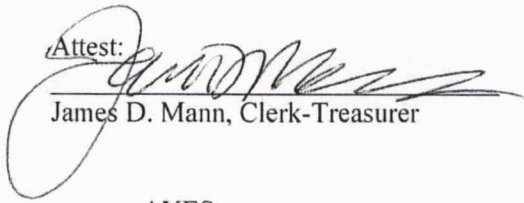
WHEREAS, due to the proposed diversion of such large amounts of water through the pipeline, there are potential negative and unconsidered consequences for Monticello residents depending upon aquifers connected to the Wabash River, including the Teays Valley underground aquifer, for their primary source of water; and,

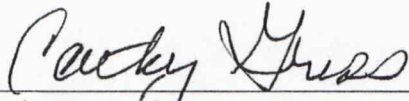
WHEREAS, though on November 13, 2023, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb directed the Indiana Finance Authority to oversee the completion and validation of a water supply study being completed for the Leap Project, further independent third-party studies, public hearings, and legislation from the Indiana General Assembly addressing these issues must take place prior to any further Leap Project planning.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Monticello City Council expresses its firm opposition to the construction of the pipeline and the diversion of water from the Wabash River aquifer in Tippecanoe County to the LEAP Innovation District in Boone County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be delivered to all Indiana General Assembly members representing any part of White County, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, the Indiana Finance Authority, the Indiana Secretary of Commerce, and Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb.

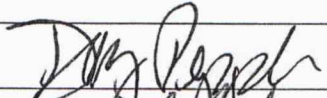
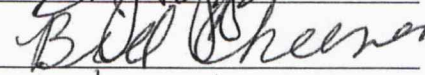
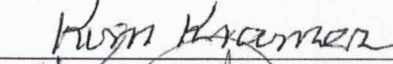
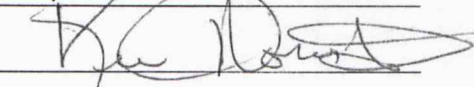
APPROVED AND RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Monticello,  
Indiana, on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023.

Attest:   
James D. Mann, Clerk-Treasurer

  
Cathy Gross, Mayor

AYES

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