Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Phil Montgomery, Chairperson
Eric Callisto, Commissioner
Ellen Nowak, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

For Immediate Release – December 8, 2011

Contacts: Jeffrey Ripp, PSC, (608) 267-9813
Steve Elmore, DNR, (608) 264-9246

Study Identifies Potential Water Conservation Savings and Costs

Utilities could save more than 164 million gallons per day by 2030

MADISON—Reducing distribution system leaks and losses is the most cost-effective way for Wisconsin water utilities to achieve water savings, according to a recently released report. The study evaluated the costs and benefits of implementing various conservation measures, such as toilet rebates and other customer incentives, submetering customers, updating plumbing codes, conducting customer water audits, implementing conservation-based water pricing.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) jointly funded the year-long investigation into potential statewide water savings under several water conservation scenarios. According to the final report, Wisconsin water utilities could save at least 164 million gallons per day by 2030 by implementing cost-effective and technically achievable water conservation measures.

"The Commission encourages water utilities to implement cost-effective solutions that reduce energy and water use and that save ratepayers' money in the long term," according to Jeffrey Ripp, PSC Assistant Administrator for Water. "This report will help to inform the Commission's decision making by identifying those activities that are cost-effective for water utilities."

"The DNR promotes protecting Wisconsin waters through sound water management. Water conservation and water use efficiency are important tools to safeguards our groundwater, springs, lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands," says Jill Jonas, Director of the DNR's Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater. "This report contains concrete information that will help us guide utilities towards developing cost-effective conservation programs."

Utilities can use the findings to compare the cost of investing in new water supply infrastructure with the cost of implementing conservation measures. According to the report, it costs a utility between $1.65 and $2.00 per 1,000 gallons to develop a new water supply. In comparison, fixing distribution system leaks costs a utility, on average, $0.46 per 1,000 gallons.

The report provides an independent, statewide analysis of achievable water savings. Camp, Dresser, & McKee, Inc., in Milwaukee, and Water Accountability, LLC, in Sussex, served as the lead project consultants.

To download a copy of the final report "*Water Efficiency Potential Study for Wisconsin*," visit the PSC's website at: http://psc.wi.gov/conservation/water/wc-reports.htm. PSC and DNR are accepting public comments on the report through January 13, 2012. Comments may be submitted via the PSC's comment page under docket 5-GF-213 at: http://psc.wi.gov/apps40/dockets/comment.aspx.

-END-