

December 4, 2002

Shirley Suhsen, Chair
Sawyer County Land and Water Conservation Committee

Dear Chair Suhsen:

In June of this year, I stood before this Committee describing the damage caused to my property by the high water levels on Round Lake. I have shared with the County the results of my research concerning the historic documents about Round Lake. I have explained that the County has a duty to maintain the water levels as specified in a 1941 Public Service Commission of Wisconsin Order. However, given the dialogue in past meetings, I understand that some Committee Members believe the water level on Round Lake should be higher than those specified in the 1941 Order.

Though we can argue all day about the proper lake level, I hope we can all agree that the County should, at least, have the power to control the lake level. Today we heard the County's own consultant conclude that neither the culverts at NN nor the dam are capable of controlling the water levels in Round Lake. Without the power to control the lake level, many lakefront properties and the lake itself can and will be damaged by high water levels.

One of the functions of government is to create the infrastructure necessary to protect property owners from such damage. Installing adequate culverts at NN and an adequate dam that will protect property and control the water levels on Round Lake and Little Round Lake should simply be viewed as part of this necessary infrastructure. Regardless of whatever lake level it believes the lake should be maintained at, the County should have control over those levels. Even if you disagree with me about the proper height, I hope you recognize the benefits of having the power to control the lake levels.

As you know, I strongly believe the County is required to maintain the lake levels designated within the PSCW's 1941 Order. The water levels this past year were significantly higher than the maximum allowed by the 1941 Order and that high water level caused a significant amount of damage in May, 2002, including damage to my property. Sawyer County has three options: (1) ignore the high water levels and the damage being caused by them; (2) ignore its obligation to respond to the problems; or (3) solve the problem.

While the County has three possible actions, I have two: (1) I can either give money to my lawyers to force the County to recognize its obligations; or (2) I can help fund the solution. As I stand here before you, I emphatically state that I would prefer my money go to solving the problem, rather than getting a court to order the County to enforce the lake levels and to

compensate me for my lost land. To that end, I am willing to donate \$25,000 to Sawyer County if it agrees to design and implement a plan to construct water-control structures that (1) would allow the County to control the water levels on Round Lake, and (2) the County would agree to maintain the levels specified in the 1941 Order. I have already spent over \$50,000 in engineering costs, attorneys' fees and investigation costs. I am committed to insuring that the water levels in Round Lake are controllable, are maintained at a level that will not continue to damage lakefront properties, and will preserve the integrity of Round Lake.

I hope you will join me in avoiding costly litigation and instead in ensuring Sawyer County has control over the water levels of Round Lake, Little Round Lake and Osprey Lake, thereby minimizing the amount of erosion caused by the high water levels. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Hausman

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