



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Foxconn deal leaves the health of our waters to the discretion of a foreign company and should be rejected

The Foxconn bill heading for approval by the Assembly is bad economic policy and terrible environmental policy. It sets a dangerous precedent for Wisconsin communities that do not wish to give up clean water to profit a foreign corporation. River Alliance of Wisconsin opposes the Assembly's Foxconn bill. We hope the State Senate shows the common sense to insist on proven protections for our waters and communities.

River Alliance Executive Director Raj Shukla said, "Much has been made of the dizzying array of proposed tax giveaways totaling up to \$3 Billion—reportedly the largest corporate subsidy in American history. But these funds are only part of the equation; a foreign corporation will be handed sweeping powers to use—and potentially abuse—local water resources with little public input or oversight."

Within the as-yet-unidentified "electronics and information technology manufacturing zone" where Foxconn would locate, corporations will control the quality of our water:

- Corporations will have the right discharge dredged materials or fill Wisconsin wetlands without a permit
- Corporations will be exempt from requirements to create new wetlands when filling existing wetlands
- Corporations will receive the ability to change the course of a stream without a permit
- Corporations will gain rights to build on a lake or stream bed without a permit
- Corporations will be able to sidestep an "Environmental Impact Statement" before any construction
- Corporations won't answer to the Public Service Commission on any desired public utility projects

What do everyday people in Wisconsin get?

- Few, if any, meaningful opportunities to shape the project and protect local water resources
- A \$3 Billion bill that will not be repaid for a decades
- An unspecified and unguaranteed promise of jobs, many of which will go to neighbors in Illinois

"With the Foxconn bill, Governor Walker, his allies in the Assembly, and a foreign corporation present Wisconsin workers with a cynical choice: a job or clean water for your community. That's a threat, not a 'gift'."

said Shukla, referring to Department of Natural Resources Secretary Cathy Stepp's recent remarks on the proposed Foxconn deal. It's a threat that sets a dangerous precedent for economic development in the future. Will Wisconsin taxpayers soon be told that any company with plans to grow in Wisconsin can expect to bear little or no responsibility for ensuring the health of local communities? Will existing companies soon have rights to disregard long-standing environmental protections too?

"We can capitalize on the state's natural assets, including its water resources, instead of degrading them. In fact, protecting our water resources is central to our prosperity as a state, region and nation," said Shukla.

The proposed Foxconn site will likely be somewhere in the Great Lakes basin and thus impact the largest freshwater system on the planet. Businesses throughout southeastern Wisconsin recognize the opportunity the Great Lakes offer and have created one of the most vibrant and influential clusters of water-based businesses in the world. The impact of the work done to promote the region as a global freshwater center is threatened by the prospect of local water resources that are tainted because of lax or non-existent environmental oversight.

The urgency to attract employers to Wisconsin and grow jobs is very real. But we should not sacrifice responsible due diligence, our history of conservation, and control of our water resources in pursuit of investment from foreign corporation. "These are our waters— we cannot afford to give them up as a condition of jobs that are far from guaranteed," said Shukla.

The River Alliance of Wisconsin cannot support the State Assembly's Foxconn deal given the enormous risk it presents to Wisconsin communities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raj Shukla", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Raj Shukla
Executive Director, River Alliance of Wisconsin