

Dear County Board Supervisor,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Yahara Lakes Association to strongly urge your support of the proposed \$15 million clean lakes package in the Dane County Executive's proposed budget. The Yahara Lakes Association includes a membership of over 500 Dane County lakeshore residents. More importantly, we share a vision for the future of the lakes with thousands in Dane County who recognize the value of revitalized lakes, whether they are boaters, fisherman, swimmers or just enjoy gazing upon the waters. Much progress has been made in preserving and improving the lakes, but more investment is needed to sustain and enhance the value of the lakes to our region. In May 2007, the Yahara Lakes Association introduced a community vision for our lakes that is wholly consistent with the investment dollars proposed in the budget. We believe that realizing this vision is essential to the future social and economic vitality of Dane County. The opening statement of our vision is included below. I ask that you read it and join us in supporting this community effort to restore our lakes. I urge you to cast your vote for passage of these essential investment dollars.

Sincerely,

Douglas Bach
President, Yahara Lakes Association

A COMMUNITY VISION FOR RESTORING AND ENHANCING THE YAHARA LAKES

The Yahara chain of lakes is universally identified as the defining natural feature for the Madison area and Dane County. The lakes are inextricably linked to the region's history and are vital to maintaining and improving the quality of life that has earned the region its reputation as one of the nation's best places to live and work. ***The Yahara Lakes Association is committed to the revitalization, rehabilitation and enhancement of the Yahara chain of lakes and believes that achieving this vision is not only feasible, but essential to the region's future prosperity and quality of life.***

We are certain that the negative impacts of decades of human habitation **can be** reversed and that the natural health of our lakes **can be** improved for all to enjoy. Our resolve for this effort and our

certainty for its success are based in science and rely on advances in infrastructure and institutional practices that minimize impacts and reshape our community's relationship with its lakes. The essential ingredients for this undertaking are energy from our citizens and business community, technical expertise from scientists and engineers, and the steadfast commitment of elected officials.

Success can be achieved through a long-term public-private commitment and a sustainable public policy focused on restoring the health of our region's most valuable natural asset – the Yahara chain of lakes.

We are not naïve. The passing of time and the legacy of history preclude us from returning to pristine, pre-European settlement conditions, nor would many find that an acceptable goal. Rather, our vision is of a modern, sustainable relationship with our lakes. ***We seek a thriving community that derives its vitality from its lakes, enjoying and sustaining a more naturally diverse aquatic ecosystem, a healthier fishery, improved water clarity, fewer algal blooms, and reduced impacts from invasive species.***

This vision is attainable and can be realized by aggressively pursuing modernization of our behaviors, infrastructure and institutional practices. With energy and commitment, we are confident that within a generation we can reverse decades of high-impact human activity and attain our vision of lakes that are not only compatible with a thriving community, but lakes that have realized their full potential as our region's crowning jewel.