Historically, water law has been the province primarily of lawyers and policy makers in the arid western United States. In recent years, however, lawmakers in the eastern and midwestern United States have come to recognize the critical role that water management plays in securing a healthy and vibrant society over the long term.

In recognition of this development, The University of Toledo College of Law and its Legal Institute of the Great Lakes (LIGL) are proud to sponsor this 11th annual conference on national water issues.

The conference this year will address multiple issues that greatly impact the Great Lakes region.

Regulating Water Use Within the Great Lakes Basin Under the Compact

The 2008 Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact not only prevents diversions of Great Lakes waters to other parts of the nation and world, it also requires states to regulate water usage within the Great Lakes basin. Efforts to implement the interstate Compact’s in-basin requirements have been especially controversial in Ohio, where the governor this summer vetoed new legislation that had been criticized by environmental groups and officials from other states. This panel, which includes leading Ohio legislators on both sides of the aisle, will address key issues facing Ohio and other Great Lakes states implementing the in-basin requirements of the Compact.

Whose Shore Is It?

The shores of the Great Lakes are a legal battleground. States and lakefront property owners dispute the boundary between state-owned lakebeds and privately owned uplands. The public asserts a right to use even privately owned shores, while lakefront owners seek to exclude the public from their property. This panel, featuring opposing counsel in an Ohio Supreme Court case involving ownership of and access to the Lake Erie shore, will explore the various parties’ rights and duties regarding the shores of the Great Lakes.

Hydraulic Fracturing and Water Resources

Hydraulic fracturing (also known as “fracking”), often in combination with horizontal drilling, is an increasingly common and widespread method of enhancing natural gas production in the Great Lakes states, especially from shale formations. Although many laud the economic benefits of the boom in natural gas production, many are concerned about its adverse effects on our surface and ground waters. This panel of experts will discuss the relevant federal and state laws as well as the impacts of fracking on our water resources.
The Legal Institute of the Great Lakes (LIGL) is a multidisciplinary research center within the College of Law. The institute supports research, maintains publications and sponsors conferences on legal, economic and social issues of importance to the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada.