STATE OF WISCONSIN
    ) SS
COUNTY OF ROCK    )

This is to certify that this Resolution is a true and correct copy of the original
as passed by the Rock County Board of Supervisors at a meeting of said Board held in
the Rock County Court House, Janesville, Wisconsin, Thursday, February 25th, 2016.

Given under my hand and Official Seal of the County of Rock, State of
Wisconsin, this 2nd of March, 2016.

[Signature]
Lisa Tollefson
Rock County Clerk

(SEAL)
RESOLUTION
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisor Jeremy Ziae
Supervisor Thomas J. Brien

INITIATED BY

County Board Staff Committee

SUBMITTED BY

RESOLUTION NO. 16-28-492
AGENDA NO. 12.G (1)

Randy Trenner
DRAFTED BY
February 12, 2016
DATE DRAFTED

Opposition to Senate Bill 432/Assembly Bill 554 Allowing for Privatization of Water Utility

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 432/Assembly Bill 554 proposes changes to allow communities that operate water utility systems to transfer ownership/management from the public sector to the private sector; and,

WHEREAS, the bills could result in out-of-state and potentially multi-national companies to assume control of municipal water supplies with less oversight; and,

WHEREAS, privatization of water utility systems often leads to declining quality of service, higher water rates, less accountability and oversight as private companies do not face elections or have to disclose operational information; and,

WHEREAS, current law requires:

A. A thorough review and approval by the State’s Public Service Commission which would evaluate the water utility value, proposed conditions of sale/lease prior to holding a referendum;

B. A referendum prior to selling or leasing publicly owned water utility systems, with the ballot language to include factual information about the costs and conditions of the sale/lease. This procedure ensures citizens agree to a change in the ownership or operation of a publicly owned water utility system; and,

WHEREAS, proposed legislation would put the burden on citizens to petition for a referendum and places the Public Service Commission review and approval after approval by a local referendum; and

WHEREAS, the privatization of municipal water utility systems is a means to profit from what should be a public good and a basic human right and the State should be working to strengthen, not weaken the ability to protect valuable resources such as our public drinking water.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors, duly assembled this 20th day of February, 2016, does hereby oppose Senate Bill 432/Assembly Bill 554; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Rock County’s legislative delegation, the authors of the bill, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

If in the event the bill passes, the Rock County Board of Supervisors asks the governor to veto the bill.

Respectfully submitted,
COUNTY BOARD STAFF COMMITTEE

J. Russell Podzilni, Chair
Sandra Kraft, Vice Chair
Eva Arnold
Henry Brill
Betty Jo Bussie
Mary Mawhinney
Louis Peer
Alan Sweeney
Terry Thomas

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:
Matter of policy.

Josh Smith
County Administrator

FISCAL NOTE:
This resolution is advisory only and has no direct fiscal impact on Rock County operations in and by itself.

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:
Advisory only.

Jeffrey S. Kuglitsch
Corporation Counsel
Senate Bill 432

This bill makes changes to current law. One of the most significant changes is the way a sale of utilities are approved. Under the proposed legislation a referendum is not required for the proposed sale unless within 30 days the municipality adopts the ordinance or resolution required under the current law, a petition requesting the referendum is filed with the municipal clerk. The petition must be signed by a number of the municipalities qualified electors that is at least 25% of the votes cast in the municipality for governor in the last election (in the case of Janesville that would be 19,836 signatures). If a petition is not filed within the deadline, no referendum is required and the municipality must submit the proposal to the PSC for approval.

There is only one municipality that is owned by a private corporation. Superior's base charge is $51 per quarter more than double the average $21 for major water utilities in the state.

When base charges and the amount charged per gallon are taken into account, the average quarterly bill for a Superior customer using 5,000 gallons of water is $152 a month compared with the state average of $73.