



City of Lewiston Press Statement

May 12, 2022

From Lewiston City Councilors and Mayor

Today, the City of Lewiston filed a lawsuit against the Auburn Water District in order to protect and preserve the quality of the water of Lake Auburn. Lake Auburn is the source for drinking water for thousands of residents of Lewiston, the City of Auburn and the Town of Poland.

The stakes of this dispute to the area's residents are high. In the early 1990s, a newly-enacted federal law required that all drinking water be filtered. A filtration plant for Lake Auburn was then estimated to cost between \$20,000,000 and \$24,000,000 with annual operating costs projected at \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000. Now, costs of filtration are likely double that amount.

Government regulators gave Lewiston and the Auburn Water District a waiver from a requirement to build a water filtration plant, on the condition that it enter an agreement to maintain the high water quality of Lake Auburn. For thirty years, Lewiston and the Auburn Water District have worked together to preserve the pure water of Lake Auburn.

Now with anticipated development in the watershed, the City of Lewiston requested that the Auburn Water District continue to honor its commitment under its contract with the City of Lewiston. On March 31, 2022, Lewiston asked the Auburn Water District to adopt a moratorium on future development in the Lake Auburn watershed, unless and until a study showed that there would be no adverse effects on the quality of the region's drinking water. To date, Auburn Water District has not responded to the request and has refused to discuss or negotiate the matter with Lewiston. So, in order to ensure its voice, and that of Lake Auburn's, is heard, the City of Lewiston filed this lawsuit.

As Mayor Carl Sheline put it: "The City of Lewiston and the Auburn Water District have a long partnership to provide clean drinking water from Lake Auburn. I hope that this dispute can be resolved in that spirit. Until then, Lewiston will fight to ensure that all of us who get our drinking water from Lake Auburn will continue to get clean water."

The sentiment was echoed by City Council President Lee Clement: "The Lewiston City Council is united in its purpose to protect the water of Lake Auburn for all who drink it. The Auburn Water District shared that purpose when it entered into several legal agreements to protect the water in the past thirty years. We hope that the Auburn Water District comes forward now to continue to protect our water per its commitments to do so. We look forward to its response."