



October 3, 2011

Milton Township, Planning Commission  
Attn: Joe Merrilat, Secretary  
P.O. Box 309  
Kewadin, MI 49648  
[jjmer@torchlake.com](mailto:jjmer@torchlake.com)

**Subject: Support for a proposed ordinance requiring an evaluation of septic systems at the time of property title transfer**

Three Lakes Association continues to support the adoption of Milton Township's proposed ordinance requiring an evaluation of septic systems, and private water supply systems, by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan at the time of property title transfer. We also support the adoption of the companion Inter-Governmental Agreement, which is intended to assure that the Health Department of Northwest Michigan will be actively involved in these evaluations. We understand that these evaluations would take place as part of the process of changing names on the title of property under those conditions that also uncaps the title for tax purposes, including the sale of property.

Our rationale for supporting the adoption of this proposed ordinance and the companion Inter-Governmental Agreement is as follows:

1. This ordinance appears to be a practical and cost-effective step toward helping to manage a source of human activity-related phosphorus currently entering the watershed in a practical and cost-effective manner. This source of phosphorus may be larger than phosphorus from lawn fertilizers and detergents.
2. The long-term benefits of managing this source of phosphorus currently entering Torch Lake would be expected to help protect the quality of water for future generations, based on a 2006 study that was co-sponsored by Milton Township.
3. The Subcommittee of Milton Township's Planning Commission prepared informative responses to frequently asked questions about this proposed ordinance, and pointed out the educational value of an evaluation report to the new owners of the property, and the need for objectivity of the Health Department's evaluators.
4. Clean lakes brought many of us to this area and continue to attract tourists; so, it is important to begin to address the failing septic systems. Evaluating septic systems at the time of property transfer represents the lowest cost and most gradual approach to solving this problem.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dean Branson*

Dean Branson, President  
Three Lakes Association

*Norton Bretz*

Norton Bretz, Executive Director  
Three Lakes Association