

A request from Indianapolis Power & Light to draw from Lake Monroe in case the energy provider needs extra water to cool its Petersburg generating plant was made public thanks to a 2007 bill proposed by local legislators.

State Reps. Peggy Welch and Matt Pierce, both D-Bloomington, and Eric Koch, R-Bedford, and Senate Minority Leader Vi Simpson, D-Ellettsville, all advocated the legislation signed by Gov. Mitch Daniels in 2007.

The bill set up a system to notify citizens of any request to divert water from a reservoir or lake under the state's control to a private project through public hearings overseen by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Commission.

Area lawmakers advocated for the legislation after developer **Beurt SerVaas'** May 2006 plan to build a 60-mile pipeline to divert water from Lake Monroe to Indianapolis became public. The plan later was abandoned after public protest and Daniels' stated opposition. Lake Monroe is Bloomington's water supply.

"The legislation does provide an opportunity for hearing and public notice so stakeholders will have a chance to weigh in on proposals," Koch said Tuesday, adding, "This is just an example of the law working in practice."

Welch said such hearings give the public a chance to let their voices be heard, thereby creating a more transparent process.

The public hearing for IPL's request will be at 11 a.m. Thursday in the third-floor meeting room of the Monroe County Courthouse.

A second public meeting will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday in the upstairs meeting room of the Brown County Office Annex Building, 201 N. Locust Lane in Nashville. A portion of Lake Monroe lies in Brown County.

The contract with the state would give IPL the ability to draw up to 23 million gallons of water per day from Lake Monroe in case it needs extra water to cool the Petersburg plant.

DNR spokeswoman Monique Riggs said the contract would allow IPL to reserve an annual maximum of 1,000 acre-feet — or 325.9 million gallons — of water from the lake for low flow augmentation.

If the contract were approved, IPL could request water be released from the lake, which would follow the White River East Fork to the company's Petersburg plant in Pike County, where it would be used for cooling, Riggs said.

The contract would not allow the water be used for other purposes, such as drinking.

Got questions on IPL request?

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A second public meeting will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday in the upstairs meeting room of the Brown County Office Annex Building, 201 N. Locust Lane in Nashville.

Those with questions regarding the public hearings should contact Monique Riggs at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Division of Water at 402 W. Washington St., Room W264, Indianapolis, IN 46204, toll-free at 877-928-3755 or mriggs@dnr.in.gov.

Bethany Nolan; 331-4373 | bnolan@heraldt.com, 'Law required notice of IPL lake request - Law was enacted after Beurt SerVaas' 2006 effort to divert Lake Monroe water to Indianapolis', *Herald-Times* (online), 20 May 2009 <<https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.monroe.lib.in.us/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/14444D8AA55C83A0>>

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