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When 'Gray Water' Is Good Enough

A former federal environmental official urged a Senate committee today that it should support legislation that bans the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) from creating redevelopment site cleanup rules that are stricter than federal standards.

Marie Ann **HORNICO**, who worked during two different periods with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said state environmental officials can get too hung up on making water crystal clear instead of being more sensible about clean up efforts.

"In general, if something is good enough for across the country, it should be good enough here," said Horniko, a guest of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

For example, if a company wants to redevelop a brownfield in the middle of a heavily industrial area, it doesn't make sense to require pristine groundwater if nobody is going to use that groundwater for drinking for many, many years to come.

Horniko said she's seen New Jersey and Wisconsin develop some "best practices" on the brownfield redevelopment front that has their programs "galloping off."

After speaking to the Senate Economic Development and Regulatory Reform Committee today, Hornoko told *MIRS* many countries across the world are forced to make due with limited water supplies. Since most of the United States is blessed with sufficient water, we end up wasting it.

Instead of being afraid of "gray water" -- collected rainwater or bathwater, for example -- the country can find other uses for it other than drinking.

The committee did not take a vote on **SB 0437**, sponsored by Sen. Jason **ALLEN** (R-Traverse City).