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# \$2.5 million to fight water pollution in Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair counties

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**BY PEGGY WALSH-SARNECKI**

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Supporters say a \$2.5-million state program -- funded by unclaimed bottle-deposit money -- will establish the most comprehensive pollution check ever for Lake St. Clair, the Clinton River watershed and the St. Clair River.

State and environmental officials said Monday the plan is the first in the country to search for the sources of all types of pollution across governmental boundaries. The program, which will be funded over three years, will cover Macomb, Oakland and St. Clair counties.

The plan could become a model for water monitoring projects nationwide, said Steve Gold, deputy health officer for the Macomb County Health Department, one of the agencies receiving funds.

"This is a unique project," Gold said. "It's much broader and more comprehensive than any other project that I know of," in that it includes multiple governments, health departments and citizen groups and will monitor such a broad range of potential pollution.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm symbolically presented the \$2.5 million to the three counties Monday at a meeting at Harrison Township's Metropolitan Beach.

Previous efforts to identify pollution sources, largely in Macomb County, have primarily focused on E. coli or other bacterial pollution, and faulty sewer systems. The new program also will check for pollution from sources such as industries, farms and road runoff.

The program will serve as a watchdog for the entire watershed leading to Lake St. Clair. Previous efforts have tended to stop short of searching upstream once reaching another jurisdiction or government border.

Advocates call the program a common-sense solution.

"The fact that it is a comprehensive plan that has been put together by three counties to figure out the most efficient means of doing this monitoring approach -- and that it's funded -- is probably the most unique aspect of this effort," said Cyndy Roper, Michigan director of the environmental watchdog group Clean Water Action.

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After the pollution sources are identified, ordinances or other mechanisms will be developed to prevent it.

Granholm also presented \$700,000 promised to St. Clair Shores to clean up PCB pollution in the 10 Mile/Lange/Revere Canal. The money is expected to cover dredging the canal and removing the PCBs that were not removed by a nearly \$6-million emergency federal cleanup last winter.

While not making any promises, Granholm didn't close the door on more state funding if the second cleanup fails to clear up the problem.

"We want to make sure it's clean. If this doesn't do it, we'll have to take another look at it," she said.

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