

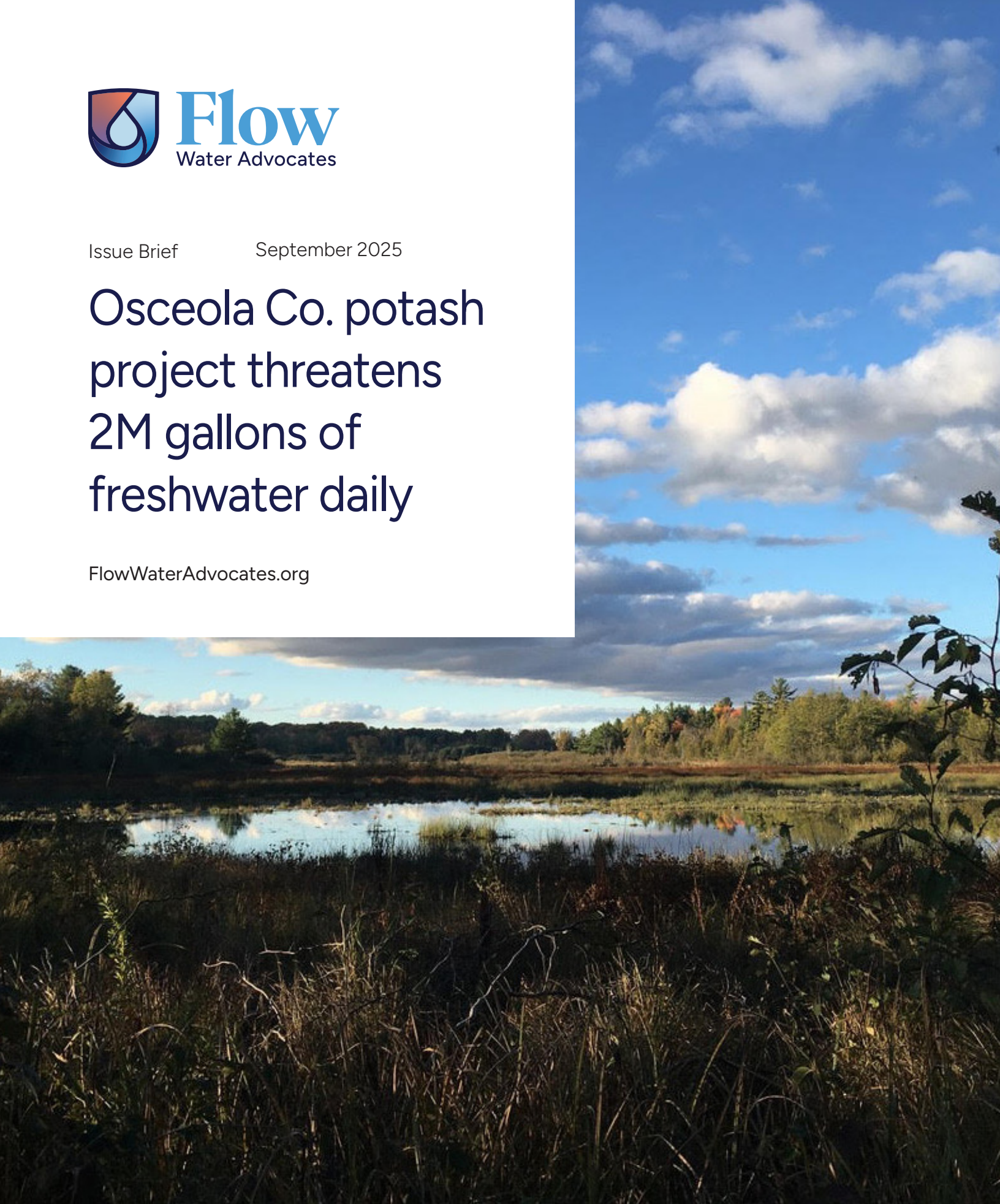


Issue Brief

September 2025

Osceola Co. potash project threatens 2M gallons of freshwater daily

FlowWaterAdvocates.org





2M+

More than 2 million gallons of water would be withdrawn EVERY DAY to crack the potash, and water usage is expected to increase throughout the project.

Rushed potash fracking operation threatens groundwater and wetlands.

Michigan Potash & Salt Company is attempting to develop a massive potash and salt fracking facility in rural Osceola and Mecosta Counties, right next to Bullkill Marsh, some of Michigan's most beautiful and fragile wetlands. If built, the Michigan Potash mine would consume more than two million gallons of freshwater per day — almost 4 times more water than the controversial BlueTriton bottling plant less than 10 miles away. Much of **that water would become briny chemical waste and then injected deep underground.** One thing stands in the way: money. And they're asking the public to fund it.

Michigan taxpayers are on the hook.

Michigan Potash is currently seeking a federal loan guarantee **worth over one billion dollars.** Without this federal backing, Michigan Potash may lack the capital to move forward. In effect, this speculative venture is being propped up by taxpayer support at our risk. Despite marketing itself as an "essential domestic supplier," **Michigan Potash has no production track record, despite receiving a \$50 million tax subsidy** for the company's plan from state legislators in 2022. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation approved \$225 million in tax-exempt state bonds that same year. Now, the company is receiving an additional \$80 million from the USDA's Fertilizer Production Expansion Program for construction, equipment purchases and working capital for the new production facility.

COVER:

The proposed site of the proposed potash mine in Osceola County. Photo credit: Jessica Miller.

RIGHT:

Wetlands would be deeply affected by the potash mine, including lakes, streams, drinking water, and wildlife. Photo credit: Sydney Howard.





In July 2025, **Flow Water Advocates** successfully **appealed** Michigan Potash & Salt Company's Underground Injection Control permits, **leading the EPA to completely withdraw the permits in their entirety.** While this is a win for our waters, the fight isn't over.

LEFT: Fir trees sit behind a silhouette near the location of the proposed potash mine in Osceola County. Photo credit: Sydney Howard.



RIGHT: A turtle swims in a wetland near the location of the proposed potash mine in Osceola County. Photo credit: Sydney Howard.



The potash mine would devastate wetlands and potentially contaminate drinking water.

This process can pose serious environmental risks, including degradation of fragile wetland ecosystems, contamination of groundwater, and the release of pollutants, mostly brine, that threaten nearby communities and drinking water. In areas where potash mines are proposed or operating, residents and environmental advocates often raise concerns about long-term damage to water resources and the broader ecological impact.

The business case for the mine has always been questionable. Unlike other major producers, Michigan Potash lacks rail access, meaning it will rely entirely on truck transportation. The underground ore body is thin, producing more salt waste than usable potash. A previous effort to mine this reserve failed.

80%

80% of U.S. demand for potash is already supplied by Canada.

Meanwhile in Canada...

Canadian producers already supply more than 80% of U.S. demand. A similarly-sized Canadian potash operation employs fewer than 15 people, raising **massive** doubts about Michigan Potash's promise of 200 "permanent" jobs.

All this makes the company's reliance on expedited federal permitting even more

concerning. The project has benefited from the Trump-era FAST-41 permitting process, which rushes environmental reviews and reduces opportunities for public input. Executive Order 14241 gives agencies the authority to approve high-risk extraction projects like Michigan Potash on an accelerated timeline. In some cases, environmental reviews that would normally take years are now being pushed through in just weeks.



The project would **withdraw over two million gallons of freshwater daily, and dispose of processed brine in underground injection wells.** The company's request to increase its air emissions permit raises further concerns about public health and pollution burdens on local communities.

<15 jobs Fighting for our future.

Fewer than 15 permanent jobs at comparable Canadian mines.

This rushed process threatens one of Michigan's most valued natural resources: our water. The proposed mining site borders expansive, pristine wetlands that host migratory birds, trumpeter swans, Blandings turtles, bald eagles, beavers, and otters as residents of Bullkill Marsh and surroundings.

In July 2025, Flow Water Advocates successfully appealed Michigan Potash & Salt Company's Underground Injection Control permits, **leading the EPA to completely withdraw the permits in their entirety.** While this is a win for our waters, the fight isn't over. We have the opportunity to make our voices heard. Public comments, legal challenges, and sustained scrutiny of the project's finances can all help protect Michigan's waters from irreversible damage.

\$1.5B

\$1.5 billion of federal and state taxpayer dollars would be spent on the project for Michigan Potash.

What is potash and how is it mined?

Potash is a potassium-based mineral that is used for modern agriculture, primarily in fertilizers to enhance plant growth and boost crop yields. **Extracting potash is far from simple, and new research suggests that many American farms don't need as much potash fertilizer as previously thought.** It is typically mined from deep underground deposits using methods that consume vast amounts of freshwater and generate large volumes of waste. These water-intensive techniques, such as solution mining, involve injecting water underground to dissolve the mineral, then pumping the brine to the surface for processing.

Flow Water Advocates is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Our mission is to ensure the waters of the Great Lakes Basin are healthy, public, and protected for all. With a staff of legal and policy experts, strategic communicators, and community builders, Flow Water Advocates is a trusted resource. We help communities, businesses, agencies, and governments make informed policy decisions, and protect public trust rights to water.

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