

Rep. Hebl: Requests stronger environmental enforcement measures

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(MADISON) –Member of the Assembly Committee on the Environment and Forestry Representative Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie), along with Democratic colleagues, sent a letter to new Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary Dan Meyer requesting that he bring back the stronger environmental enforcement standards that existed before 2011. Hebl noted that from 2000-2010, actions taken to correct environmental violations were much higher than in the period since Governor Walker took office in 2011.

“Across the board, actions taken against environmental violators are down,” Hebl said. “Notices of Violation are down 47%. Citations are down 56%. And judgments received by violators are down a staggering 70%, which accounts for about \$23 million dollars lost since 2011. It’s clear that voluntary compliance has not worked. We need to return to stronger enforcement.”

The letter also requests that Meyer, as DNR Secretary, allow DNR staff to testify in favor of or against bills that will affect the Department. Recent practice has been that DNR staffers testify “for information only” without taking a stance on the bill, a practice which Hebl says is unhelpful.

“As legislators, we rely on experts to give us insight into what effects bills will have,” Hebl said. “Testifying for information only is meaningless. As representatives of DNR and with a mission of ‘protecting and enhancing’ Wisconsin’s natural resources, I expect that testimony from DNR will include whether or not they support a bill.”