

Rep. Kitchens: Introduces clean water access bill

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Madison- Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) released the following statement after introducing LRB 2171/1 with Senator Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay):

“Yesterday I released LRB 2171/1 with Senator Rob Cowles. This important piece of legislation will provide relief and access to clean water, a basic right that most of us take for granted.

“The karst geo-region of Wisconsin is characterized by shallow soils over limestone bedrock. Underground streams flow within the bedrock, and sinkholes and fractures in the bedrock act as conduits to the surface, allowing pollutants to flow freely into the groundwater. The Karst region forms a “V” on the map of Wisconsin and includes all of Eastern Wisconsin. It is particularly problematic in Northeastern Wisconsin where there is a very high concentration of dairy cattle and very little soil to act as a filter to remove fecal contaminants before they reach the groundwater. Additionally, recent testing has shown that a high number of wells in Kewaunee County are contaminated by human feces.”

This bill provides that a city, village, town, or county may remediate a contaminated private well, fill and seal a contaminated well, or rehabilitate, replace, or abandon a failing private on-site wastewater treatment system, in agreement with the owner of the well or wastewater treatment system, or may make a low-interest or interest-free loan to the owner of a contaminated well or failing wastewater treatment system for these purposes. Under the bill, if a city, village, town, or county takes any of these actions or provides a loan for these purposes, the city, village, town, or county may recover the costs of the action or collect the loan repayment as a

special charge or special assessment on the property tax bill.

“Additionally, we are proposing to increase the limit on the amount of a grant awarded under our states well compensation grant program. Under current law, a grant awarded under the program may not exceed 75 percent of a project’s eligible costs and may not cover any part of a project’s eligible costs that exceeds \$12,000, which means that a grant may not exceed \$9,000. This bill increases the grant award limit to 75 percent of \$16,000, which means that a grant under the bill may not exceed \$12,000.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this much needed legislation.”