

Rep. Kitchens, Sen. Cowles: Clean Water Access Bill signed into law

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MADISON– State Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) and Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement after 2017 Assembly Bill 226, the Clean Water Access Bill, was signed into law as 2017 Act 69:

Representative Kitchens stated, “I am thrilled that the Clean Water Access Bill was signed into law earlier today by Governor Walker. This crucial piece of legislation will provide relief to families across Wisconsin and access to clean water, a basic right most of us take for granted. The water contamination issues plaguing Northeast Wisconsin have no simple fix, but this bill provides vital and immediate assistance to those affected today. I will continue to work towards comprehensive solutions to the situation we are in, but this bill must not be undervalued. I know many counties and families across the state are eager to take advantage of the benefits it provides. I want to thank my conservation departments, as well as all the non-profit groups and farmers who supported this bill. My greatest thanks goes to Senator Cowles for his relentless perseverance in aiding with this bill.”

Senator Cowles added, “Access to clean drinking water is vital to human health, and today’s bill signing provides hope to those who don’t have easy access to clean drinking water. The Clean Water Access Bill is not a cure-all silver bullet, but assistance in replacing failing septic tanks and contaminated wells is an important step forward for the residents of Northeast Wisconsin. Drafting and passing this bill would not have been possible without the hard work and continuing dedication of my co-author, Representative Kitchens. It was my pleasure to work with him on this important piece of legislation.”

The Clean Water Access Bill increases the grant amount that may be awarded under an existing state program for rehabilitating or replacing contaminated wells. The

legislation also gives local governments the authority to provide low-interest or interest-free loans to the owners of contaminated wells or failing septic systems. The signing of Act 69 into law will complement the DNR's revisions on Administrative Rule NR 151 and DATCP's revisions on ATCP 50 in addressing the underlying problem of water contamination in Northeast Wisconsin. The Clean Water Access Bill is supported by local governments and health departments, farmers, and conservation groups.

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