

# Rep. Shankland: Introduces bipartisan clean water legislation

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MADISON – Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) has introduced legislation to provide Wisconsin homeowners with increased access to private well testing and remediation for contaminated wells.

According to a 2013 study, 47% of private wells in Wisconsin are contaminated at levels above health standards. While the DNR recommends that homeowners test their wells at least once a year, many are unaware of the need for testing or can't afford the testing fees. Homeowners with documented well contamination are eligible for some assistance through the state Well Compensation Grant Program, but many have found they are ineligible due to the income threshold and other restrictions.

“Clean and safe drinking water is vital to our quality of life and public health,” said Rep. Shankland. “But across the state, families are buying bottled water because they don't know how often to get their well tested or simply can't afford to fix their contaminated wells. Given the damaging effects of water contaminants on public health, the state must do more to ensure the frequent testing and treatment of our private drinking water sources.”

Rep. Shankland's bill, LRB 3991, provides \$100,000 annually for the DNR to administer a private well testing grant program in collaboration with local governments. The bill also expands income eligibility and grant awards through the Well Compensation Grant Program, which helps homeowners replace, reconstruct, and treat their contaminated wells. Under the bill, homeowners with wells

contaminated by nitrates would no longer be required to own livestock to be eligible for the grant program.

“Incentivizing well testing and increasing eligibility for well compensation grants are significant yet simple steps we can take to recognize the problem our state is facing with access to clean water,” continued Rep. Shankland. “This bipartisan legislation will empower homeowners to monitor their private wells, remediate contaminated wells, and work with their communities to identify solutions to contamination sources. We all deserve access to clean and safe drinking water.”