

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation: High capacity well bill signed into law

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Contact: Paul Zimmerman, Executive Director of Governmental Relations
[608.828.5708](tel:608.828.5708)

Madison, Wisconsin – Governor Scott Walker has signed a Wisconsin Farm Bureau-backed bill into law that provides certainty to farmers with existing high capacity wells on their farms.

Senate Bill 76 authored by Senator Scott Fitzgerald (R – Juneau) and Representative Gary Tauchen (R – Bonduel), specifically addresses replacement, reconstruction and transfer of ownership of existing high capacity well permits. The bill also clarifies state law by directing Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources to restore certainty to previously issued high capacity well permits. Senate Bill 76 was approved by a 19 to 13 vote on April 5 by the State Senate and was approved by the State Assembly by a 62 to 35 vote on May 2.

“It is important for farmers with high capacity wells to have financial and regulatory certainty,” said WFBF President Jim Holte. “Wisconsin Farm Bureau would like to thank Governor Walker for signing this bill into law and providing that assurance.”

SB 76 states that no additional approval is needed for an existing high capacity well to repair or maintain the well, to construct a replacement high capacity well of substantially the same depth within a 75-foot radius of the existing high capacity well, to reconstruct the existing high capacity well, or to transfer the approval of a high capacity well as part of the sale of land where the well is located. The bill also requires DNR to study the hydrology of specific waterbodies in Wisconsin's Central

Sands and report those findings to the Legislature.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general farm organization, made up of 61 county Farm Bureaus and representing agriculturists and farms of every size, commodity and management style.