

Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters: Public gets a say on manure spreading rules

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Comment Period Will Allow Citizens to Weigh in on Drinking Water Crisis

MADISON – The public comment period on a set of new manure management rules is officially open, and the public now has the opportunity to help strengthen them.

Wisconsin is facing a drinking water crisis. A recent study showed 18 percent of all wells in the state are contaminated with bacteria that indicates the presence of disease-causing organisms.

In July, the Department of Natural Resources released new rules designed to protect families, groundwater, and lakes and rivers from manure pollution.

The proposed changes to Administrative Rule NR 151 begin to address excessive pollution from factory farms in limited ways, including the rate at which manure can be applied on vulnerable areas and creating larger manure application boundaries around private wells and contamination points, like sinkholes and fissures

However, Executive Director Kerry Schumann said the rules do not go far enough to protect residents in places like Kewaunee County who already cannot drink from their own wells, or to prevent similar crises from developing across the state.

“Though some of the rules are a step forward, the step is too short when measured

against the scale of the drinking water crisis in Wisconsin,” Schumann said. “Fortunately, the public can now make its voice heard and help strengthen the rules to protect families who can’t drink water from their taps.”

To protect Wisconsinites, the rules should prohibit manure application on soil less than three feet deep over bedrock, and the DNR should map and collect geologic and water quality data in southwest Wisconsin to prevent a crisis similar to what is happening in Kewaunee County.

The public comment period begins today and will close October 4th. Anyone can email DNRAAdministrativeRules@Wisconsin.gov to urge state officials to protect Wisconsin families, drinking water, and lakes and rivers.