

# Wisconsin Wetlands Association: Statement on the Foxconn Bill

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The Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) has consistently supported efforts to streamline wetland regulatory reviews, provided that the reforms do not weaken wetland protections. The wetland and waterway exemptions and mitigation requirements contained in Assembly Bill 1 fail to meet this bar.

We oppose these provisions because exemptions place the public's resources at risk and provide no accountability for outcomes. We also strongly reject the idea that it is to the state's advantage to cede water-related review and decision-making to the federal government.

With respect to the Foxconn development, we also believe these changes are not needed to advance the proposed action. State wetland policy reforms adopted in 2012 provide more than adequate means to complete an expedited review and secure wetland approvals. What *is* needed, is a strategy to manage the potentially explosive growth a project of this magnitude could set in motion.

**We urge policy-makers to consider alternative approaches to facilitate the desired economic growth and improve water management in Southeast Wisconsin.** Specifically, we recommend that the Foxconn incentive package include an appropriation for a planning exercise to identify priority areas for future development and wetland restoration, and the establishment of a permanent expedited review process for pre-approved development and mitigation sites.

This innovative and solution-oriented approach could ease the way for the suppliers, housing projects, and other amenities that economic development experts believe Foxconn will help to attract, while also spurring investments in wetland restoration to reduce flood risks and damages, improve water quality, reduce runoff, and more.

“We need to take a proactive approach to wetland protection and restoration in our increasingly developing landscapes,” said WWA’s Executive Director, Tracy Hames. “Planning ahead and establishing an integrated framework to expedite permitting and development while also addressing regional water problems provides double the benefits and far less conflict. This is the concept we should be testing.”

Wisconsin Wetlands Association remains available to help policy-makers bring Foxconn to Wisconsin and establish a forward-thinking, solution-oriented approach to wetlands and development in Southeast Wisconsin.

Inquiries about this proposal should be directed to WWA’s Policy Liaison, Brian Vigue at: [608-250-9971](tel:608-250-9971) / [brian.vigue@wisconsinwetlands.org](mailto:brian.vigue@wisconsinwetlands.org).

For more on how a regional approach to wetlands and development could benefit Wisconsin, watch WWA’s August 6th interview on [\*WKOW’s Capital City Sunday\*](#).