

Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters: 'Walker's Wisconsin' reveals depth of damage to state's environment

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Conservation Voters Launch Series Detailing Walker's Abysmal Record on the Environment

MADISON – As part of its Field Guide to Taking Back Wisconsin campaign, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters kicked off the first entry in its Walker's Wisconsin series. The series recounts Gov. Scott Walker's extreme anti-conservation agenda and outlines just how far he's taken our state, once considered a conservation model, to somewhere that's hardly recognizable.

Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters will update the Walker's Wisconsin series via media releases, website, and social media every two weeks until Wisconsin elects a new governor in November. Walker's Wisconsin concentrates on five categories – air, climate change, democracy, land, and water.

“Unfortunately, when we looked at the entirety of Scott Walker's record, we quickly realized we have a book's worth of content to share,” said Executive Director Kerry Schumann. “The Walker's Wisconsin series will show voters how aggressively this administration has stripped Wisconsin of one of its most deeply-held ethics: the protection of our natural resources for future generations.”

To read more, visit the Field Guide at conservationvoters.org/field-guide.

Walker's Wisconsin - AIR

1. Walker opened the door to more frac sand mining

The Walker Administration has let polluting frac sand mines off the hook while Wisconsinites breathe dirty air. Silica dust, a byproduct of mining, can cause silicosis - an incurable lung disorder - as well as cancer and lung scarring. Under Walker, Wisconsin has refused to adopt health-based standards for silica dust as other states like Texas have done. When the scary substance showed up in the New Auburn school district's air filters, school officials were understandably concerned. It fell on the school's superintendent to purchase higher quality air filters to prevent children from breathing in carcinogens. The district paid double the price of normal filters, costing \$1,500 per year. Because of low air quality standards, the district was forced to allocate education funds to ensure basic safety.

Walker's Wisconsin - CLIMATE CHANGE

1. Walker blew it on wind energy

One of Governor Walker's first legislative goals was to throw wind farm development out the window by imposing extreme restrictions that suffocated Wisconsin's clean energy future (January 2011 SSAB 9). Instead of embracing \$1.2 billion in potential wind farm investment for the state, Walker took the wind out of Wisconsin's sails by choosing special interests over the people of Wisconsin. A poll taken by Wisconsin Public Radio at the time showed an overwhelming 77 percent support for more wind energy investment. Yet Walker decided to again reward private interests like the fossil fuel company Koch Industries and the oil, tar, and gas industries. Walker received over \$1.5 million in campaign cash from interests opposed to wind energy.

Walker's Wisconsin - DEMOCRACY

1. Walker prioritized big business over your air, land, and water

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce works aggressively against environmental and public health protections, spending money supporting the most anti-conservation bills and legislators in Wisconsin, including the Industrial Acid Mining Bill (2017 Act 134) and Senator Tom Tiffany. Last year, WMC initially opposed a bill that aimed to protect children from lead poisoning (SB 48). WMC raised and spent about \$33 million between January 2006 and December 2017, according to

watchdog group Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. WMC spent the bulk of that on broadcast ads to support anti-conservation candidates and smear the opposition. Governor Scott Walker has been the top beneficiary of WMC's outside election spending. The group has shelled out an estimated \$9.5 million to help keep him in power.

Walker's Wisconsin - LAND

1. Walker promoted and signed the Open Pit Mining Bill

Governor Walker's signing of the Open-Pit Mining Bill (2013 Act 1) was a defining moment in his term as governor. The Open Pit Mining Bill opened the door to iron mining that could endanger human health, irrevocably scar the beautiful Penokee Hills, and contaminate waterways and Lake Superior. It was arguably one of the worst environmental bills in Wisconsin's history, opening the door to legislation written to benefit one industry or company. With Walker's signature, it became the law of the land.

Walker's Wisconsin - WATER

1. Walker welcomed industrial acid mining back to the state

Senator Tom Tiffany loves toxic mines, and he has Governor Walker's ear. Last year, Walker signed Tiffany's Industrial Acid Mining Bill (2017 Act 134) - a law that repealed the gold standard Prove It First mining law which required mining companies to prove they would not pollute Wisconsin's waters. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, metallic sulfide mining is America's most toxic industry. It inevitably creates acid mine drainage, which seeps into surface and ground water carrying things like arsenic, lead, and sulfuric acid. Now, mining companies are at the gate looking to strip Wisconsin land, pollute its rivers, and leave taxpayers to pick up the cost of pollution. Acid mine drainage lasts for thousands of years. Ancient Roman-built mines still create new toxic pollution in the United Kingdom today.

Look for the second entry in Walker's Wisconsin on Tuesday, June 5th. For citations and all of the published entries in the Walker's Wisconsin series, visit conservationvoters.org/walkers-wisconsin.