

Rep. Hebl: Plans environmental friendly legislation

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Rep. Gary Hebl, (608) 266-7678

The environment is one of the most important issues we see today. The threat of climate change and the seeming indifference of some to the pollution of our air, water, and land are leading to perhaps the most dire threats facing our world.

As the Ranking Member in the Assembly Committee on Environment and the State Lead for the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators, I take the stewardship of Wisconsin's environment extremely seriously. In the interim between Earth Day (April 22nd and Arbor Day (April 26th), I wanted to take the opportunity to outline pieces of pro-environment legislation that I am working on to fight to protect the environment for generations to come.

Some of that legislation includes:

- Banning toxic flame-retardant chemicals:

- o This bill will prevent manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, and retailers from manufacturing, selling, or distributing certain children's products and upholstered residential furniture containing toxic flame-retardant chemicals

- Pollinator Protection Act

- o Despite their importance (responsible for between \$235 and \$577 billion in crops produced worldwide), pollinators face steep population declines due to factors such as habitat loss and pesticide use. A relatively new class of insecticide called neonicotinoids has been linked to pollinator decline worldwide. This bill will add neonicotinoids to the list of certain pesticides that are regulated in Wisconsin. It

prohibits the sale of neonicotinoids unless a seller is permitted by Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection to sell certain other restricted pesticides. It also prohibits the use of neonicotinoids, with certain exceptions.

- Strengthening Mining Regulations

- o Mining regulations were loosened to entice a single company to the state. It never ended up coming to Wisconsin, yet regulation remain lax. In addition, last session the majority party repealed an anti-pollution measure that had been in place for two decades. This bill will once again strengthen environmental protections with regards to mining and will re-instate the anti-pollution measure.

- Plastic Straws Upon Request

- o To help reduce the amount of plastic waste, this bill will allow food service business to distribute plastic straws, but only upon customer request.

These are small steps towards a larger goal. More must be done to protect the environment. I will always be looking to craft meaningful legislation to help reach that goal.