

# Rep. Kitchens: Applauds passage of pollution prevention bill

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin State Senate unanimously passed a bill today authored by Rep. Joel Kitchens, R-Sturgeon Bay, and Sen. Robert Cowles, R-Green Bay, that aims to reduce the amount of contaminants in state waterways by creating a system for buying and selling pollution credits through a third-party central clearinghouse.

“Pollutant trading is a sound strategy recognized by the federal Clean Water Act, but our current program is being underutilized because most point and nonpoint pollution sources do not have the resources or relationships to seek out trading partners,” Kitchens said. “I applaud the Senate for bringing us closer to being the first state in the nation to establish a statewide clearinghouse that serves as a broker and manager of their pollutant trading system. I can’t wait to lead the way and show the rest of the country what solutions our Legislature has to offer regarding the very serious issue of water contamination.”

The Pollution Prevention Partnership Act authorizes the state Department of Natural Resources to give a point source permit holder an alternative to marginal EPA-mandated discharge reductions of a pollutant by purchasing credits from a clearinghouse or other third-party brokers certified by the DNR. Those credits come from nonpoint sources that have taken steps to reduce their pollutants. All trades must result in an improvement in water quality in the affected watershed.

“I am confident this legislation will provide a tremendous benefit to our state by

giving farmers, industries and municipalities the tools and financial incentives they need to work cooperatively toward our common goal of protecting our state's essential ground and surface water," Kitchens said.

The Assembly version of the bill still needs to receive a public hearing and be voted on by the Assembly Committee on Local Government. If the legislation is passed by that committee, it will go to the full Assembly for a vote. If the bill is then passed without any amendments, it can then be sent to the governor to be signed into law.

The legislation is supported by numerous groups representing a wide array of stakeholders, including the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Dairy Business Association, Clean Wisconsin, Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association and the Nature Conservancy.