

# Rep. Tusler: Wetlands bill signed into law promotes sustainable environment

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**Madison, WI** – Today, [Senate Bill 169](#), authored by Representative Ron Tusler (R – Harrison), Senators Van Wanggaard (R – Racine) and Robert Cowles (R – Green Bay), and Representative Tod Ohnstad (D – Kenosha) was signed into law as 2019 Act 59. This law incentivizes the creation of wetlands in needed areas and requires mitigation occur as close to an allowable disruption as possible.

**“This law just makes simple, environmental sense for our state and will particularly benefit areas of the state that are most in need of the ecological benefits that wetlands provide,”** said Rep. Tusler.

This law incentivizes investment in new wetland projects by tying the release of wetland sellable credits to specific benchmarks during the course of a wetland development project. In populated, developed, and developing areas, the cost to create wetlands can be high, discouraging wetland mitigation bank developers from investing in new projects. The change in law is expected to kick start new wetland projects by reducing the barrier to wetland creation.

According to a [study](#) by Purdue University, “[a] one acre wetland, one foot deep, can hold approximately 330,000 gallons of water. When wetlands are removed, storm water runs directly into the watershed, increasing flooding.”

**“This bill also requires that mitigation credits be purchased as close to an allowable disruption as possible and not on the other side of the state,”** continued Rep. Tusler.

Under previous law, it was possible for mitigation to occur anywhere in the state. Act 59 makes the default location for mitigation within the same hydrologic unit when possible, but gives flexibility to the Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Natural Resources to require different mitigation if it would better serve natural resource goals.

Ensuring that mitigation occurs close to the source of the impacted wetland will help to better filter groundwater, provide critical habitat for waterfowl and other species throughout the state, and lessen flooding during extreme precipitation events.

**“As my great-grandfather, Senator Gordon Bubolz, once said, ‘Love of nature is a responsibility, a privilege, and a challenge,’”** Rep. Tusler said. **“I am proud to continue his legacy of environmental responsibility for the use and enjoyment by future generations.”**