

# Sen. Cowles: EPA promotes innovative solutions to water quality; Cowles legislation, 'P3,' helps to Advance these goals

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GREEN BAY- Yesterday, Region 5 of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) \$11.5 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants to Midwestern states. Among the recipients were Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District (NEW Water) which received \$338,438 for buffers on ephemeral headwaters in Fox River sub-watersheds; an adaptive management technique to improve water quality in a region without the over burdensome expense of massive infrastructure upgrades that provide minimal impacts. This approach by NEW Water is in line with market-based approaches for nutrient reductions that includes water quality trading.

While few examples of water quality trades, including one at Heart of the Valley Metropolitan Sewerage District in Kaukauna, currently exist in Wisconsin, a new approach, 2019 Senate Bill 91, will help to promote more of these market-based approaches to water quality in Wisconsin. This legislation, better known as P3: Wisconsin's Trading Marketplace to establish more Pollution Prevention Partnerships, is authored by Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) and Senator Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon). 2019 Senate Bill 91 and the companion, Assembly Bill 113, have fostered the support of over 30 groups. This legislation awaits a vote in the full Assembly before it may advance to the Governor's desk for his signature.

*“P3: Wisconsin’s Trading Marketplace represents an exciting and innovative opportunity to provide farmers and other nonpoint sources with some financial incentive to implement more advanced land and water management practices. This bipartisan, groundbreaking effort will promote more water quality trades by introducing a third-party clearinghouse into the currently inflexible pollutant trading process to create a marketplace for trades. Adding this ‘middle-man’ to the equation will encourage more sewerage districts and factories to seek out these beneficial agreements by reducing the red tape and eliminating the difficulty presented by having to create a relationship between point and nonpoint source partners.”*

***“This current announcement by EPA demonstrates their clear commitment towards helping the State of Wisconsin implement the nation’s first statewide water quality trading marketplace. While the goal is to create a reduction in nutrients entering waterways to help clean up our waters, these pollution prevention partnerships would have numerous ecological, financial, and recreational benefits. These trades would be beneficial to all Wisconsinites and tourists to our great state, not just those involved in trades. By bringing more farmers to the table and incentivizing them to implement proven land conservation strategies, coupled with the opportunity for industry to comply with permit requirements in a more cost effective manner, this bill has the potential to make a positive impact on our state’s environment and economy. I’m glad to have it reaffirmed that EPA will be a partner, not a problem, when we implement this legislation.”***