

# Sen. Cowles: Pollution prevention partnership clears Senate committee

Posted on Thursday, Mar 28, 2019

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Senator Robert Cowles ~ (608) 266-0484

*Innovative Approach to Addressing Water Quality Now Available for a Vote in the Senate*

MADISON– Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement after 2019 Senate Bill 91, titled P3: Wisconsin’s Trading Marketplace ~ Creating a Pollution Prevention Partnership and authored with Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) and Senator Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon), passed the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy unanimously during this afternoon’s Executive Session:

*“I’m excited about today’s progress. Due to our farming culture and abundant water quantity, Wisconsin is uniquely situated to host this marketplace. More than 50 bipartisan legislators and groups representing agriculture, business, local government, and natural resources all recognize the benefits of this approach and the opportunity these Pollution Prevention Partnerships present for water quality improvements and our state’s economy.”*

This legislation is designed to create a market-based framework to remove greater amounts of pollution from our state’s waterways. Water quality trading is not a new idea. These mutually beneficial water quality trades allow unregulated nonpoint-sources, such as family dairy farms, to create a reduction in total pollutants entering a waterbody quantified as credits to provide some relief to a regulated point source, such as a municipal wastewater treatment plant or cheese factory. However, the inflexibility of the current process along with troubles facilitating direct trades between point and nonpoint sources has left Wisconsin with only a

couple of handfuls of trades. Developing a robust marketplace through a third-party clearinghouse would provide the framework necessary to make water quality trading a success by facilitating and certifying trades and minimizing the risk in transactions while producing a greater pollution reduction within a hydrologic area.

*“Getting this bill through the legislative process would reaffirm our state’s commitment to clean water, but the implementation of a clearinghouse cannot happen overnight. Between the DNR working with federal regulators, the bidding process for selecting the clearinghouse, and the establishment of this marketplace, it will take a little bit of time before we really notice the impacts of a functioning water quality trading system. Today’s swift progress shows broad support and widespread enthusiasm about pushing forward the opening of a clearinghouse to allow us to start reaping the benefits of water quality trading sooner rather than later.”*

P3: A Pollution Prevention Partnership was approved by the Senate Committee with a simple amendment that addresses some of the procedural concerns raised by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), local water utilities, and other interested groups. Senate Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 91 adds more certainty for the clearinghouse, those involved in trades, and the DNR by: requiring the DNR’s approval of the negotiated clearinghouse contact; further defining clearinghouse responsibilities; requiring the certification of credits before the credits are made available; providing for an evaluation of the new program after four years, and; other technical changes. This legislation is now available for scheduling before the full Senate.