

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce: Supports lawmakers' innovative approach to sustainability

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MADISON - Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) Director of Environmental and Energy Policy Lane Ruhland released the below statement of support for a new bill authored by Sen. Rob Cowles, Sen. Jerry Petrowski and Rep. Joel Kitchens that removes barriers to a sustainable technology market for farmers.

This bill makes necessary improvements to Wisconsin's current water pollution credit trading system, making it less expensive for farmers to invest in technologies that will improve Wisconsin's water quality. Under this bill, point source dischargers, like manufacturers, paper mills and food processors, would be able to purchase water quality credits from a clearinghouse and in exchange, nonpoint source dischargers, like farms, will use these funds to purchase technology aimed at reducing phosphorous discharge.

Following the bill's introduction, Ruhland said:

"Often, in an effort to improve water quality, policymakers seek to place additional regulatory burdens on manufacturers and farmers. However, continuing to regulate the heavily regulated only serves to harm our economy and does little to address water quality issues in our state. Manufacturers, food processors, cheesemakers and others face ever-increasing technological costs to make only a very small impact on the environment.

"It is possible to improve our water quality and our economy at the same time. To do so, we need an approach that leverages the private sector's technological solutions, while rejecting a heavy-handed regulatory approach that drives businesses out of the state. This bill is a great example of an 'outside the box' approach that allows the private sector to do what it does best: find cost-effective solutions. Allowing this sustainable technology sector to thrive in our state benefits not only farmers and manufacturers, but all of us.

"WMC applauds Sen. Cowles, Sen. Petrowski and Rep. Kitchens for their leadership on this issue, and we look forward to supporting it."

[See LRB 1244 by clicking here.](#) The deadline for co-sponsorship is Friday, Mar. 8.