

Rep. Hesselbein: Champions clean water protections

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MADISON – Today, Representative Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton) supported a bipartisan package of legislation aimed at improving water quality across Wisconsin. Last year, Governor Evers declared 2019 as the “Year of Clean Drinking Water” which was one of the catalysts for these efforts. After the governor introduced significant initiatives in his budget proposal, the Speaker’s Water Quality Task Force held a total of 14 public hearings across Wisconsin which led to the bills passed today. Representative Hesselbein released the following statement on her support for clean water protections:

“I am encouraged that we passed a package of bills that moves the needle forward on water quality in our state. I am thankful the legislature as a whole is taking the governor’s pledge to clean water in his first State of the State seriously. After nearly a decade of removing protections for our environment, especially for our clean water, Republicans are following Governor Evers’ lead on clean water protections. It is clear that while some of the measures we voted on were done in a bipartisan fashion, there are still more steps we have to take to clean up the mismanagement of the unilateral Republican control over the last decade.

“We need to restore protections for our water resources. This includes reinstating the Prove it First law in issuing sulfide mining permits and restoring wetland protections that were removed in the last session. We need to give back local control to Wisconsin communities, especially in shoreline zoning, that was taken away two sessions ago. We need to

invest in public health. This includes funding removed from the governor's proposed budget for lead service line replacement and contaminated sediment removal and investments in grant programs in well compensation and water resource management.

"At the end of the day I am pleased to see progress on clean water with the bills submitted by the task force and I applaud the leadership of our caucus members on the task force and Governor Evers for making this issue a priority. We have a long way to go on protecting our environment but this is a good first step."