

Rep. Nygren: Reaction to new DNR PFAS test results

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Madison–State Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette), author of numerous pieces of bipartisan legislation aimed at addressing PFAS contamination, released the following statement:

“Late yesterday, I was made aware of recent water test results by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the City of Marinette,” said Rep. Nygren. “I hope my colleagues in Madison appreciate the seriousness of the water contamination issue in Marinette County. Today the news is about contamination in Marinette and tomorrow it could be any other community in Wisconsin.”

The DNR announced results of testing in the City of Marinette that found high levels of PFOA and PFOS (PFAS chemicals found predominantly in firefighting foams) contamination outside of the current identified contamination zone.

“The DNR has the authority to establish regulatory standards for PFOA and PFOS today. Instead they took over six months to begin the permanent rule process and have not used the emergency rule process. The latest test results underscore the need to regulate PFOA and PFOS today,” said Rep. Nygren. “In the DNR’s absence, Sen. Hansen and I worked together on legislation to ensure certainty and clean water for the residents in Marinette and Peshtigo who are directly impacted by this contamination. We need to pass this legislation.”

AB842 and AB843, which would fund additional testing and research of PFAS chemicals and directs the DNR to establish emergency rules for the regulation for PFOA and PFOS, passed out of the Assembly Committee on Environment 12-0 and 11-1 respectively. Shortly after the vote, Rep. Nygren sent a letter to Assembly

Majority Leader Jim Steineke formally requesting a vote on the floor of the Assembly.

“While these bills are not the silver bullet to solve this issue, they will make a difference,” said Rep. Nygren. “I urge Majority Leader Steineke and Speaker Vos to schedule these bills for a vote on the Assembly floor. I hope my colleagues understand the gravity of the situation in Marinette and Peshtigo and other areas of the state. Residents in these areas have had their drinking water contaminated at no fault of their own and we should act quickly to stop the flow of these potentially harmful chemicals into drinking water.”