

Sen. Cowles, Rep. VanderMeer: Bill to simplify water meter project regulations signed into law

Posted on Friday, Nov 5, 2021

>> **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.](#)**

MADISON– Representative Nancy VanderMeer (R-Tomah) and Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statements after a bill they authored, 2021 Assembly Bill 302, was signed into law today as 2021 Wisconsin Act 86:

“Water meter projects are both common and necessary as meters may become less accurate over time, resulting in over or under billing. However, replacing water meters costs more and gets slowed by the PSC approval process, especially with the perpetually unclear language surrounding exemptions,” said Senator Cowles. *“Act 86 makes a simple change to remove a costly, time-consuming, and unnecessary regulatory rubber stamp for these necessary projects by our local water utilities. I want to thank the Wisconsin Rural Water Association for bringing this idea to our attention, and I want to thank all the supporters of this common-sense effort.”*

“Unfortunately, relatively smaller municipalities in the state are inordinately affected by bureaucratic hurdles and contradictory or unnecessary directives from state agencies. The issue that this legislation addresses was first brought to my attention by the Village of Vesper in Wood County and the 70th Assembly District. They are a relatively smaller municipality that simply doesn’t have the manpower or administrative capacity to maneuver burdensome directives from the state,” Representative VanderMeer shared. *“2021 Wisconsin Act 86 provides clarity to existing statutes and provides remedy to municipalities throughout the state, like the Village of Vesper, that need to take on a water meter installation or*

replacement project. I was happy to work with Senator Cowles on this effort and want to thank the Wisconsin Rural Water Association and League of Wisconsin Municipalities for their efforts and expertise in helping to develop this proposal and moving it forward,” VanderMeer continued.

Under previous law, unclear regulations on which projects may be exempt from approval resulted in costly and lengthy Certificate of Authority processes for water utilities to undergo water meter installation, repair or replacement projects. [2021 Wisconsin Act 86](#) makes statutory and administrative rule changes to exempt water meter projects from needing approval by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC). This change will align water utility meter projects with regulations for similar projects by electric utilities.