

Sierra Club: Applauds Governor Evers's Budget Proposal

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MADISON – Gov. Tony Evers announced his proposal yesterday for the 2021-2023 Biennial State Budget. The proposal includes funding for climate programs, drinking water programs and more.

In response, Wisconsin Sierra Club Chapter Director Elizabeth Ward issued the following statement:

“Budgets reflect our priorities, and they put our values into practice. Governor Evers’ budget demonstrates that this administration is committed to moving Wisconsin to action on both equity and climate. Sierra Club recognizes this budget as one of the strongest we’ve seen, and we specifically applaud the funding of critical steps on environmental justice, meaningful progress on clean and equitable transportation initiatives, the resourcing of efforts that will reduce carbon emissions, and extensive action in service of a clean energy economy.”

“While the overall package of the budget promises significant progress on our core values, Sierra Club is disappointed by green lighting of the I94 expansion. The highway proposal is not in line with the commitment to social justice and climate action that we see in the rest of the budget.”

Some of the highlights from Governor Evers proposed budget:

- Environmental Justice- the budget funds a long-overdue office on Environmental Justice and funds an equity officer in each state department.

- Focus on Energy Funding- The Governor's budget doubles the funding for Focus on Energy, the state's renowned energy efficiency and clean energy program. In addition to increasing the funding, the budget proposes targeting some of the Focus on Energy funding towards low-income residents.
- Land Protection- the Budget recognizes the need to protect our natural landscapes and use them as an opportunity to mitigate climate change. The budget includes the reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship fund and funding for the study of climate sequestration through old-growth forest protection.
- Drinking-Water Protection- the budget works to address Wisconsin's water pollution crisis by funding lead pipe removal, funding programs to target run-off pollution, and well compensation. The budget proposes increasing fees on factory farms, requiring that the polluters help fund the pollution mitigation.

Supporting Local Leadership- the budget includes funding for local action on climate change, including funding for staff, research, and local initiatives. The budget also restores local control on certain plastic containers.

- Parks Access- The budget proposes allowing all fourth graders to have free admission to State Parks, mirroring the Federal Every Kid Outdoors program. This will help ensure cost isn't a barrier for kids to visit Wisconsin state parks.
- Biking and Walking Infrastructure- the budget increases funding for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for biking and walking infrastructure and restores condemnation authority for non-motorized trails.