

# Rep. Shankland: Celebrates bipartisan clean water bill becoming law

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MADISON- Today, Governor Tony Evers signed [2021 Assembly Bill 727](#) into law as 2021 Wisconsin Act 223. Rep. Shankland introduced this bipartisan bill with a coalition of legislators in the 2019-21 session as part of the Speaker's Task Force on Water Quality, and again in the 2021-23 legislative session.

The new law will help protect our state's drinking water and groundwater by creating a nitrogen optimization pilot program to help farmers reduce nitrogen loading and leaching, starting a new cover crop insurance rebate program to help farmers utilize cover crops to improve soil health, and creating a new Wisconsin State Hydrogeologist position to help local governments find and address local hotspots of contamination.

**As an author of the bill in the last two legislative sessions and Vice Chair of the 2019-20 Task Force on Water Quality, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement in celebration of the bill's signing:**

"I am thrilled that the bipartisan clean water legislation I authored and fought hard to pass over the last four years has now become law! This bill is a culmination of the work we did on the Speaker's Task Force on Water Quality. As Vice Chair, I worked across the aisle to introduce and pass ten bipartisan bills through the Assembly last session. This session, we continued our work together on clean water, and I'm so pleased to see this bill cross the finish line. I'm proud of the countless hours of work

we've put into getting this done, and I'm grateful that Governor Evers has signed our legislation into law as 2021 Wisconsin Act 223.

"This new law will provide much-needed support for farmers in taking preventative measures that protect our drinking water while strengthening farm resiliency. From offering support to farmers who lower nitrogen leaching and utilize cover crops, to supporting our local governments with resources to find and address contamination, this law will strengthen access to clean drinking water in Wisconsin. Everyone wins when we can lower nitrate contamination, safeguard our drinking water supply, and support our farmers working to protect our water quality.

"I was especially grateful to work across the aisle to draft the nitrogen optimization pilot program included in this new law. This innovative new program will transform nitrogen application practices by offering collaboration with UW System on-farm researchers to support farmers in managing nitrogen application, lowering nitrogen leaching, and sustaining farm resiliency. As a result, it has the support of nearly every agricultural organization and environmental group in the state, and with good reason. This is a testament to the fact that when legislators listen to the experts and the public and come to the table with an open mind and true willingness to work together, we can and will identify solutions everyone can support, and most importantly - we'll get results.

"Everyone deserves clean drinking water. I have said this hundreds of times over the last decade as I've worked to make it happen. This new law is an important step in the right direction that will make a meaningful difference for many. Thank you to the hundreds of people who made their voices heard at the task force's 14 public hearings across Wisconsin to urge state action on water quality, and especially to the people of Portage County for their tireless advocacy for our water resources. You all inspire me, and this victory is ours together. Today we celebrate, and then we continue working to ensure that everyone in Wisconsin has reliable access to clean drinking water."