

River Alliance: “Clean Water Now” referendum questions win bipartisan support in five more counties

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On November 8, a majority of voters in five counties voted YES on an advisory referendum question on the right to clean water.

The question read: “Should the State of Wisconsin establish a right to clean water to protect human health, the environment, and the diverse cultural and natural heritage of Wisconsin?” Among the votes counted, voters in Adams (79.7%), Bayfield (80%), Green (84%), Juneau (79.6%), and Outagamie (79.5%) counties supported the non-binding question.

“When you ask Wisconsin voters, they agree that clean water is our state’s greatest asset,” said River Alliance of Wisconsin Water Advocates Organizer Johnson Bridgwater. “We care about clean water, but now we need our state leaders to listen to the people and put our clean water values into action.”

There are urgent human and environmental health needs that must be addressed. From nitrate contaminated drinking wells and our need for action on groundwater contamination standards, to remediating PFAS contaminated water and soil, our state leaders need to put partisanship aside and work to ensure safe drinking water.

With the reelection of Governor Tony Evers and a starkly gerrymandered state legislature, Wisconsinites can expect to see a continued political stalemate and a lack of progress on the systemic change needed to stop water pollution before it starts.

“Unless state leaders start listening to the voters, we will see more stubborn

partisan politics and power grabs getting in the way of progress on urgent and fundamental issues of human and environmental health protections,” said River Alliance of Wisconsin Executive Director Allison Werner.

Voters in Marquette (73%), Portage (77%), Wood (76%), Eau Claire (79%) and La Crosse (86%) Counties also approved the Clean Water Now referendum. When voters are asked if they believe in the right to clean water, they vote YES in strong numbers that transcend political party lines.

River Alliance remains committed to being a voice for clean water and local watershed protection groups around the state that work to defend our rivers, streams, and groundwater that is the source of drinking water for most Wisconsinites.