

Wisconsin Conservation Voters: Statements on Gov. Evers dual PFAS-related announcements

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MADISON – Gov. Tony Evers made two important announcements today. The first regarding funding PFAS remediation, the second about setting groundwater standards.

First, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is submitting a request to the Joint Finance Committee to unlock funding from the \$125 million PFAS Trust Fund that was passed through the 2023-2024 biennial budget. This would ensure funding can be quickly distributed to impacted communities.

Government Affairs Manager Peter Burress had this to say:

“It’s been nearly six months since Gov. Evers signed \$125 million for a PFAS Trust Fund into the state budget. The Republican-controlled legislature has failed to deliver a structure for how that funding can be distributed to communities impacted by PFAS. With little time left before the end of the legislative session, their only proposal on the table would create a PFAS polluter loophole and undermine long-term remediation efforts.

“Impacted Wisconsinites cannot continue to wait for Republican legislators to get their act together. Today’s announcement advances a common-sense solution that puts impacted people before PFAS polluters. We’re grateful to Governor Evers for his leadership, and hope this request moves forward as expeditiously as possible.”

Gov. Evers also announced the DNR’s efforts to set a groundwater standard are paused until the legislature passes a bill permitting them to continue. This is due to

the REINS Act, a piece of Walker-era legislation that limits the DNR's ability to protect public health by only considering how new standards will impact polluters. The law does not permit any analysis of the health savings. This places strict limitations on whether and how state agencies are able to advance public health-based standards.

Gov. Evers sent a draft bill to legislative Republicans that would exempt PFAS groundwater standards from the REINS Act and urged them to pass it.

Government Affairs Manager Peter Burress had this to say:

“It’s frustrating that bad Walker-era policy put us in this position, but we appreciate that Gov. Evers is making the best of a difficult situation. Passing a PFAS groundwater standard is critical to protecting the 70 percent of Wisconsinites who rely on groundwater for their drinking water. We call on the legislature to protect Wisconsin communities and pass this bill.”