

Wisconsin Wetlands, Partners: Applaud action to fund pre-disaster flood resilience grants

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Madison – On Thursday, the Wisconsin Committee on Joint Finance (JFC) voted to dedicate state funding for a Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Program that will help flood-prone communities assess flood vulnerabilities and implement hydrologic restoration projects that restore the landscape’s natural capacity to reduce flooding.

The measure approved by the Joint Finance Committee provides \$2 million over the course of the biennium for the grant program proposed in Assembly Bill 222 (Rep. Oldenburg – Viroqua) and Senate Bill 222 (Sen. Quinn – Cameron).

The Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, and Trout Unlimited were early collaborators on this proposal and offered the following statements supporting the Joint Finance Committee’s action and Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant proposal:

“Flooding exacts a heavy public safety and economic toll on local government and the communities they represent. The steps taken to create and fund a Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant will help towns mitigate flooding damage before it happens by helping them assemble the right information, experts, and strategies to reduce flood damage risks.”

- Mike Koles, Executive Director, Wisconsin Towns Association

“The Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant program fills critical gaps in Wisconsin’s efforts to reduce flood damages. It recognizes how degraded hydrology contributes to flood risks and elevates the restoration of wetlands, streams, and floodplains as a

cost-effective and essential flood risk reduction strategy.”

- Jennifer Western Hauser, Legislative Liaison, Wisconsin Wetlands Association

“From decades of working with local, state, and federal partners, TU understands that when our wetlands and streams are functioning properly to store and slow floodwaters, that provides benefits for flood resilience and the natural habitat depended upon by our cold-water fisheries.”

- Mike Kuhr, Advocacy Chair, Trout Unlimited

Once JFC action on the 2023-2025 state budget is complete, the proposed budget will next be considered by the full Assembly and Senate before being presented to Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers. Assembly Bill 222 and Senate Bill 222, which create the Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant Program, passed unanimously in the Senate, but must be passed in the Assembly and signed by the Governor to become law.