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## **Parks Revitalization Act 2.0 Passes the Assembly**

*With Today's Action, Wisconsin is One-Step Closer to Clearing the Backlog of Critical Water Infrastructure Projects in State Parks*

MADISON— Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement after the Assembly unanimously voted to pass 2019 Senate Bill 125. Known as the Parks Revitalization Act 2.0, this legislation, authored by Senator Cowles and Representatives Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer) and Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay), provides up to \$5.2 million to help clear the backlog of water infrastructure projects in State Parks:

“To help preserve our state’s outdoor recreation industry, we not only need to attract new visitors, but we need to keep visitors coming back. Most visitors will never notice that the drinking fountains, shower facilities, or vault toilets are up-to-date. However, if that water infrastructure is run down or out-of-service, it could impact their experience in our State Parks and may impact their plans to come back or visit other State Parks in the future.

“When visitors leave our State Parks, they should bring memories of good times with friends and family and mental snapshots of the trails and scenery with them, not thoughts of rundown bathrooms or rusty bubblers. Further, an isolated illness or an outbreak of water-related disease at our State Parks would not only be devastating to those impacted, but could cause ripple effects that harm our entire outdoors-based tourism industry in Wisconsin.

**“The water facility and infrastructure upgrades that would be completed under the Parks Revitalization Act 2.0 will help to protect the health of millions of State Park visitors, preserve water quality in these pristine landscapes, and improve the experiences of those enjoying our public lands for decades to come. I trust that the Governor will recognize the need for this legislation to become law and will extend the bipartisan good will that’s been built around our shared water quality goals.”**

2019 Senate Bill 125 allows the DNR to spend up to \$5.2 million in authorized, but unobligated Stewardship funds from a prior fiscal year on critical health and safety and high priority water infrastructure projects in highly-visited Wisconsin State Parks and Forests. This legislation builds on progress from last session’s 2017 Wisconsin Act 71, also authored by Senator Cowles with Representative Ron Tusler (R-Harrison), which provided \$4.5 million from a similar funding stream by recognizing that more work needs to be done to clear the backlog in State Parks’ water infrastructure. Senate Bill 125 now heads to the Governor’s desk for his consideration and signature into law.

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