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**Wisconsin's Green Fire Releases Opportunities Now Report –
*Imbalance of Power – How Wisconsin is Failing Citizens in Conserving
Natural Resources and Protecting our Environment***



Rhineland, WI. Wisconsin's Green Fire is releasing the newest in their series of Opportunities Now conservation policy assessments titled, [*Imbalance of Power - How Wisconsin is Failing Citizens in Conserving Natural Resources and Protecting our Environment*](#).

The paper addresses the collective effects of state legislative actions, court rulings, and political practices that have undermined democratic processes and profoundly changed the way state government in Wisconsin operates.

Wisconsin's Green Fire Executive Director Fred Clark noted: "Today, instead of a robust balancing of public interests among stakeholders, a single committee of the legislature and a small number of groups representing industry, real-estate, and some agricultural interests now exercise a high level of influence over conservation and environmental programs, with direct implications for the health and welfare of Wisconsin citizens."

Clark added: “The decade-long failure to take effective actions to address these issues is affecting health and quality of life and creating a growing financial burden to Wisconsin residents throughout the state.”

For example, **contamination of drinking water from PFAS has now been documented in at least 90 Wisconsin communities** and this number is growing. And more than 42,000 private wells exceed safe levels as a result of **nitrate contamination of groundwater** in rural Wisconsin, resulting in tens of thousands of people who do not have reliable access to safe drinking water in their homes.

The report includes these critical findings:

- The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board remains effectively captured by a majority of members appointed during a previous administration because one member refuses to step down 14 months after his term has ended.
- The Joint Committee on Review of Administration Rules in the Wisconsin Legislature holds an extraordinarily high level of oversight and control over the fate of environmental and conservation programs.
- Although they were once an important tool for managing a broad range of conservation and environmental programs, **developing Administrative Rules in Wisconsin is no longer a functional process** for addressing important conservation or environmental issues.
- A growing number of Wisconsin citizens are losing faith in the ability of state government to create solutions to our greatest environmental challenges.

Wisconsin’s Green Fire Policy Liaison Paul Heinen who co-authored the paper added: “No single action or policy will reverse a decade-long period of policy failures for conservation in Wisconsin. However, in this paper we provide a detailed set of recommendations for community engagement and policy reforms.”

Ultimately, keeping government honest and effective requires the ongoing engagement of well-informed Wisconsinites demanding transparency, accountability, and effective actions that benefit all.

The paper is available at Wisconsin’s Green Fire’s website [here](#), and at <https://wigreenfire.org/our-publications/>.

*We will be hosting a webinar on **October 19th, 10:30-12:00PM CT** featuring speakers and guests sharing insights on the report’s findings. Stay tuned for registration information coming soon.*

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