

Legislators Asked to Honor Conservation Priorities In State Budget

Written by Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Ryan Billingham
Thursday, 06 May 2021 09:40 -

<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/clean-drinking-water-s5.jpg>



Clean water, clean energy are at risk of being stripped out of the state budget by JFC with a single vote on Thursday say Conservation Voters.

MADISON – Clean water, clean energy, and a healthy democracy are the keys to a brighter, more equitable, and more successful future here in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, two lawmakers on the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) are prepared to block any progress on these critical issues.



Those priorities are in jeopardy because the co-chairs of the JFC, **Sen. Howard Marklein** and **Rep. Mark Born**

announced that one of the first actions they are going to take on the proposed state budget this Thursday is to strip out key natural resources initiatives that people across Wisconsin supported in a series of budget hearings held across the state.

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Wisconsin Conservation Voters are sending messages to their elected representatives in the legislature demanding that these critical elements of Gov. Tony Evers' proposed budget remain intact as they move through the budget process.

Here's what at risk of being stripped out of the state budget with a single vote on Thursday:

Clean water

- Expediting efforts to set PFAS standards for drinking water and surface waters, similar to the Clear Act from last session.
- Holding responsible parties accountable for PFAS pollution when it threatens our environment and public health.

Clean energy and climate change

- Establishing an Office of Environmental Justice and the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy.
- Local government risk assessments and resiliency plans for climate change.
- Increasing the Focus on Energy program from 1.2 to 2.4 percent of operating revenues and lowering the threshold for low income households to be able to take advantage of energy saving programs.

Healthy democracy

- Creating automatic voter registration.

"When Gov. Evers introduced his state budget in February, we were really excited," said Government Affairs Director Jennifer Giegerich. "After listening to conservation voters across the state, the governor's budget included a wide variety of initiatives and items that directly addressed some of our most pressing statewide environmental, health, and democracy issues."

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And, they did it with a deep emphasis on equity.”

Now, Giegerich said, all of that input and work is at risk of being rejected by just two lawmakers more concerned with political posturing than the wishes, needs, and priorities of Wisconsin residents and voters.

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Engaging voters to protect Wisconsin's environment.