

Bill Promotes Flood Resilience in Wisconsin Communities

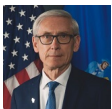
Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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Flooding is one of the most frequently occurring natural disasters across Wisconsin.

TREMPEALEAU — Gov. Tony Evers today, joined by authors and co-sponsors of the bill, local officials, and community members, signed Senate Bill 222, now 2023 Wisconsin Act 265, which requires Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), a division of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs, to create and administer a pre-disaster flood resilience grant program to provide grants for projects aimed at identifying and improving flood vulnerabilities and resilience priorities in local communities.



“We all know that Wisconsin is no stranger to natural disasters—especially flooding—and that extreme weather continues to have devastating effects on folks’ lives and livelihoods, costing Wisconsin families millions of dollars in damage to homes, businesses, local infrastructure, and the environment,” said Gov. Evers. “During my time as governor, I’ve visited homes across our state and heard from families who are asking us to help them prepare for flooding to keep their homes, farms, and businesses safe. This bill is an important step to give families and communities peace of mind and the tools they need to prevent flood damage in the future.”

Flooding is one of the most frequently occurring natural disasters across Wisconsin and the United States, affecting a great number of Wisconsin municipalities and increasing damage costs to public and private property. Last spring, Gov. Evers [declared](#) a state of emergency due to elevated flooding concerns following heavy rainfall and rapid snowmelt that contributed to flooding issues in several counties across the state. The growing threat of flooding and other severe weather underscores the importance of communities evaluating their risk of flooding and taking appropriate actions to prepare for and mitigate flooding concerns before an emergency

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Gov. Evers has long proposed and supported legislation to address the devastating effects of flooding in Wisconsin, including joining a bipartisan group of legislators to [introduce legislation](#) in 2020, as well as introducing similar policies as part of his 2021-23 and 2023-25 executive budgets. The final 2023-25 biennial budget advanced several measures to expand flood planning, prevention, and rehabilitation. In addition to increases for the municipal flood control program, which provides cost sharing to municipalities for floodproofing and flood mapping, the final budget signed by Gov. Evers included \$2 million in the Joint Committee on Finance supplemental appropriation to provide pre-disaster flood resilience grants, and Act 265 establishes the framework to administer these funds.

[Senate Bill 222](#) , now 2023 Wisconsin Act 265:

- Requires WEM to create and administer a pre-disaster flood resilience grant program to provide grants to applicants for the purpose of identifying flood vulnerabilities, identifying options to improve flood resiliency, and restoring hydrology in order to reduce flood risk and damages in flood-prone communities;
- Allows grants of up to \$300,000 per assessment grant and \$250,000 per implementation grant to be made to local and Tribal governmental units, nonprofit organizations, or private consulting organizations applying on behalf of local governmental units; and
- Establishes that applications for a grant may be considered only if: (a) the application is for a project area that was the site of a presidentially declared disaster for flooding at any time in the ten years preceding the grant cycle, (b) the application is for a project area that was the site of a governor-declared state of emergency for flooding at any time in the ten years preceding the grant cycle, or (c) the application is for a local governmental unit that has a hazard mitigation plan that identifies localized exposure to flood risk approved by the division.