https://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/hicap-residents1-s5.jpg

High capacity well bill SB 76 threatens local lakes, rivers and groundwater.

MADISON, WI – Access to clean drinking water has become a major concern across Wisconsin. Pollution, contamination and over-pumping of groundwater have depleted water supplies and created major health and economic concerns. Rather than promoting a sustainable management plan, Republican politicians are rushing to pass Senate Bill 76 which will privatize water rights, eliminate oversight and prohibit the DNR from reviewing the cumulative impact of high capacity wells on local communities.

“This bill creates an unfair system where the people with the biggest straws are allowed to suck up all the groundwater regardless of the impact on surrounding families and communities,” said Senate Democratic Leader **Jennifer Shilling** (D-La Crosse).

“Families and farmers have already seen the impact of over-pumping in Wisconsin with shrinking lakes, disappearing streams and dried up wells," said Shilling. "In rushing to pass this bill, Republicans are putting more families and communities at risk of losing economic and tourism opportunities. Rather than picking winners and losers, Democrats will continue to fight for sustainable, commonsense standards to protect equal access to groundwater.”

Republican in the State Senate passed Senate Bill 76 despite strong opposition from residents, health advocates and conservationists. Wisconsin’s water challenges have intensified in recent years as over-pumping has become more common and lax pollution enforcement from the Walker administration and Attorney General’s office has resulted in dangerous water contamination.

Many have argued that Senate Bill 76 undermines the Public Trust Doctrine outlined in Article IX of the Wisconsin Constitution. Past attempts to privatize Wisconsin's water have been struck down by courts which have upheld the Public Trust Doctrine in a series of court cases stretching back more than a century.