

Clean Wisconsin

(Founded as Wisconsin's Environmental Decade)

Your environmental voice since 1970.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Derek Scheer, water policy director

Office: 608.251.7020

Cell: 608.345.8546

Legislature on Brink of Enacting First Step Toward Groundwater Protections

After years of public debate and months of meetings between interested parties the Wisconsin legislature is poised to pass important standards for managing Wisconsin's water resources (Senate Bill 524 / Assembly Bill 926). Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy group, believes this is a good first step toward a solution. "Overall, we support this bill," said Scheer. "It does not protect all of Wisconsin's groundwater dependant resources but through future study this state can reach this important goal."

Wisconsin has a long history of ensuring its citizens' right to use but not abuse the state's waterways and water resources. Among these rights the constitution guarantees access to hunt, fish, boat, and enjoy scenic beauty. When Perrier® attempted to set up water bottling plants near Big Springs and the Mekan River, groups throughout the state organized in strong opposition. Through this fight it became apparent that the state needed to enact laws to protect against groundwater resource abuse.

Through an inclusive process Representative DuWayne Johnsrud, Senator Neil Kedzie, and their staff members brought together multiple representatives interested in and affected by groundwater management. All of these stakeholders shared a common interest in protecting this important economic and spiritual resource. By bringing these groups together, Kedzie and Johnsrud were able to fashion a good first step toward comprehensive management of Wisconsin's water resources.

"It is no accident the many churches and places of worship throughout Wisconsin have imitation springs in their sanctuaries," stated Derek Scheer, Water Policy Director for Clean Wisconsin. "People cherish the purity of water bubbling out of the ground and recognize its importance to our state."

This compromise sets standards for the DNR to promote better decision making. As a first step, these protections are in place around special resources like trout streams and large springs. This bill forms an advisory committee to look at where the protections need to be expanded in the future. It also puts in place a way for local governments in areas that are experiencing dramatic groundwater declines to work together to find a solution.

Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy organization, protects Wisconsin's clean water and air and advocates for clean energy by being an effective voice in the state legislature and by holding elected officials and corporations accountable. Founded in 1970 as Wisconsin's Environmental Decade, Clean Wisconsin exposes corporate polluters, makes sure existing environmental laws are enforced, and educates citizens and businesses. On behalf of its 10,000 members and its coalition partners, Clean Wisconsin protects the special places that make Wisconsin such a wonderful place to live, work and play. Phone: 608.251.7020, Fax: 608.251.1655, Email: info@cleanwisconsin.org, Website: www.cleanwisconsin.org.

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