

Conservation voters applaud Evers' budget proposals

Written by Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Ryan Billingham
Wednesday, 17 February 2021 11:40 -



Proposed budget includes a wide variety of initiatives to address some of our most pressing statewide environmental, health, and democracy issues says Conservation voters group.

MADISON – In his Tuesday night budget address, Gov. Evers outlined a bold budget that includes Wisconsin Conservation Voters' priority issues: clean water, clean energy, and a healthy, equitable democracy that works for all of us.

Executive Director Kerry Schumann said this about the address and the biennial budget:

"The proposed budget includes a wide variety of initiatives and items that directly address some of our most pressing statewide environmental, health, and democracy issues. Clean water, clean energy, and a healthy democracy are the keys to a brighter, more equitable, and more successful future here in Wisconsin. This budget continues and builds Gov. Evers' record of delivering on his promises for Wisconsin's natural resources. These budget proposals complement the excellent work of the governor's Climate Change Task Force and build on the administration's commitment to honoring the values and goals of conservation voters across the state. It's very simple: we deserve clean water, clean energy, and a healthy democracy for every person living in Wisconsin. That is what Wisconsin Conservation Voters and its 60,000 plus members and supporters are working for each day. This budget proposal aligns with those values and those goals."

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Specific budget highlights include:

Clean water

- Expediting efforts to set PFAS standards for drinking water and surface waters, similar to the Clear Act;
- Providing \$20 million to local governments to begin testing and remediating for PFAS;
- Adding eleven additional fulltime staff dedicated to understanding the threats from emerging contaminants like PFAS;
- Making it easier for more households to replace their contaminated wells by increasing the amount of annual family income that qualifies under the state's well compensation grant program; and
- Authorizing \$40 million in bonding for the replacement of up to 50 percent of the cost to replace lead services lines through the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program.

Clean energy and climate change

- Establishing an Office of Environmental Justice, including a Chief Resiliency Office and additional staff;
- Supporting local governments who are leading the charge in moving Wisconsin towards 100 percent clean energy; and
- Increasing to the Focus on Energy program from 1.2 to 2.4 percent of operating revenues.

Public lands

- Reauthorizing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program for ten years at \$70 million in bonding levels, a move that will help achieve worldwide goals to protect 30% of lands and oceans by 2030.

Healthy democracy

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- Automatic voter registration