

GOP HiCap Well Bill Demolishes Over 150 Years of Wisconsin Heritage

Written by Wisconsin Senate Democrats

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Senate passage Wednesday of SB 76 on High Capacity Well regulation considered a defeat for our proud tradition of environmental protection.

MADISON – In a particularly destructive move for Wisconsin small farmers, property owners, boaters, and fishermen, the Senate voted 19-13 on Wednesday to approve SB 76 to relax high-capacity well regulations. The bill is considered another giveaway to powerful corporations and corporate farms and a defeat for our proud tradition of environmental protection.



"Today Democrats in the State Legislature stood up for farmers, neighbors, outdoor enthusiasts, and those who depend on clean well water to live," said Senator **Chris Larson** in a statement. "Republicans betrayed the public by siding with special interests bent on profiting from controlling access to Wisconsin waters."

This Republican water grab will end over 150 years of water predictability. The founding vision of the public trust doctrine led to our shared waters shaping our state's traditions, economy, recreation, and identity. Our rich history has been shaped by the deep value that we have a fundamental right to clean water. This is true for all, from the small farmer to the child enjoying a cool beach on a hot Wisconsin summer day. Each of our neighbors deserves the predictability of fair access to our shared, public waters and that they will remain accessible for generations to come.

"Today's rushed bill passage comes after the alarming news last summer that Walker's Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources quietly moved to ignore the public trust doctrine, using the political opinion of Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel to cease evaluating the negative cumulative impacts of drilling new high capacity wells," continues Larson. "Further, under Walker's administration, there have been no high-capacity well permits denied."

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Wisconsin Republicans continue to play pay-off politics with our water, allowing for a flood of high-capacity well permits to be approved, leaving our water depleted and unprotected. SB 76 eliminates a crucial check and favors whoever has the most money to dig the deepest well, leaving their neighbors barren and dry.

"The passage of this destructive bill is a painful reminder that while Democrats are fighting for greater opportunity for our neighbors and communities, Republicans are giving away our future," concludes Larson. "Wisconsin must reclaim our tradition of protecting our shared lands and waters."