

'Don't Grant "Forever" Access to Wisconsin Groundwater' - Sen. Larson

Written by Chris Larson, State Senator, District 7

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Sen. Chris Larson responds to SB 76 relating to the replacement, reconstruction, and transfer of high capacity wells in Wisconsin and the decision by Senate Democrats to reject a third reading on the bill.

MADISON – The GOP is jamming through a bill that creates an oasis for the wealthy, and a desert for the rest of us. SB 76 creates high-capacity well permits with no consideration of future negative impacts. It will result in environmental damage, such as lakes, streams, and rivers running dry due to over pumping. It will let corporate factory farms suck dry the livelihood of neighboring family farmers, destroying our Wisconsin tradition of fairness and opportunity while decimating a key part of Wisconsin's identity.



Technology, along with modern pumps, allow bad actors to steal the water right from under our neighbor's feet. Looking at cumulative impacts is not only smart conservation science but protects the Wisconsin tradition of being a good neighbor. Unfortunately, SB 74 ignores the science, threatening the quality and supply of our water in Wisconsin. Over- pumping is already draining our groundwater faster than it can safely be recharged. The state has a critical role in protecting our water future; this bill utterly fails to do so.

For the past six years, corporate interests have bought better laws for themselves at our expense. Over and over they have tilted the playing field and even changed the rules to win their political games. This bill is too dangerous to rush through. My Democratic colleagues and I stood up for our neighbors by using a procedural move to delay a vote on its passage. Considering that passing SB 76 will haunt our rural communities for generations to come. I hope my Republican colleagues will use this time to weigh the serious ramifications their actions will have on our communities.

This proposal attacks a founding principle outlined in Wisconsin's Public Trust Doctrine, that our state waters are shared by all, and owned by no one. Should Republicans decide move forward

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with this bill and turn their backs on our heritage, this bill will be found unconstitutional and create wild uncertainty for responsible businesses.