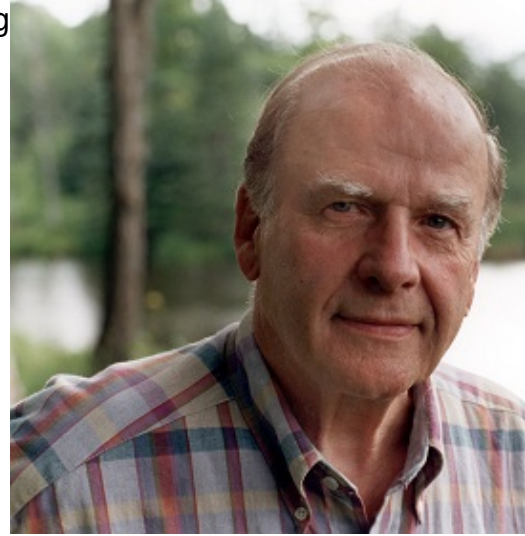


Earth Day's 50th Anniversary Reminds us to Cherish and Protect Wisconsin's Environment

Written by Jennifer Shilling, State Senator 32nd District

Wednesday, 22 April 2020 14:45 - Last Updated Thursday, 23 April 2020 15:12

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“The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.” - Gaylord Nelson

LA CROSSE, WI - Fifty years ago, on April 22, 1970, former Wisconsin Governor and U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson founded Earth Day. A day dedicated to celebrating the nature around us and promoting conservation, it acts as a symbol of progressive ideology championed by one of Wisconsin's own.

From hunting, fishing and recreation, to our robust agriculture industry, our environment and unique natural features are a major driving force behind the success of our local economies. And that's why it's so important we continue to fight for the conservation of our state and our country, just as Governor Nelson did half a century ago.

Despite Wisconsin's rich history and connection with the outdoors, protecting our environment hasn't always been a priority for the leaders of our state. But after eight years of an administration focused on rolling back environmental protections, Governor Evers provides a much-needed perspective. Like Nelson, he believes that our environment is something to be treasured, not taken for granted. And he's pushed many progressive policy changes that would put the future of conservation center-stage.

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In fact, in the past year, Evers has created a Task Force on Climate Change to develop strategies that'll help communities reduce its effects. He also created the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy to oversee Wisconsin's goal of providing 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050, and prioritized water quality and sustainability solutions within his budget proposal. By taking these steps, he's proven that he can push Wisconsin in the right direction – but there's still a lot of work to be done.



Over the past decade, historic storms and flooding have repeatedly challenged our communities, devastated local businesses and wreaked havoc on Wisconsin's crops, making it clear that climate change is a real threat to our state. And while my Republican colleagues may see environmental protection policies as trivial and unimportant, Wisconsin Democrats remain committed to setting sustainable, commonsense standards – and you can help.

This Earth Day takes place during a truly unprecedented time. While we all do our part to shelter in place and tackle the COVID-19 pandemic head-on, it's easy to feel isolated. But at the same time, it reminds us how connected we really are, and how our actions spark consequences for the world around us. So, today I challenge you to think about your impact on the environment. And take this time to implement a few eco-friendly changes in your life. Whether that's cutting down on plastic, opting to consume less energy or switching most of your shopping to local, environmentally-conscious companies, your changes in behavior, no matter how small, will help to carry out the legacy of Gaylord Nelson. Because, as he once said, "The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."

Let's all do our part to leave behind a better Wisconsin for tomorrow.

Jennifer Shilling serves as the Senate Democratic Leader and represents the 32nd District which covers La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford and parts of Monroe County.