

2019-2020

Conservation Scorecard

A REVIEW OF THE WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE



**Wisconsin
Conservation
Voters**



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An aerial photograph of a wide river flowing through a lush, green landscape at sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, yellow, and red, with the sun low on the horizon. The river's surface is calm, reflecting the warm colors of the sky and the surrounding trees. In the foreground, there's a dense forest of trees with varying shades of green. The middle ground shows a large, irregularly shaped island or peninsula covered in dense vegetation, with a small pond or inlet of water. The background features rolling hills and more distant land under the twilight sky. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, emphasizing the natural beauty of the environment.

***Engaging voters to
protect Wisconsin's
environment***



Rep. Robin Vos

Speaker of the Wisconsin
State Assembly
R-Rochester

WHAT THEY SAID

"I agree that the recent reports of water contamination in private wells in southwestern Wisconsin are disturbing. Every Wisconsinite should have access to safe, clean drinking water."

WHAT THEY DID

Although Vos formed the Speaker's Water Quality Task Force, he then gave an outsized voice to corporate polluters. In the end, the task force did not even approach its stated goals. **It was a massive failure.**

Photo: Lehnmat, under
CC SA 4.0 license

Story of the Session

You care about safe, clean drinking water. Wisconsin voters care about safe, clean drinking water. Members of the legislature from both political parties said they care about it, too. Even Assembly Speaker Robin Vos claimed he was making your drinking water a priority this session.

Why then did the legislature fail to pass policies that will make sure you can turn on your tap and have clean water? Why couldn't one of the most influential people in Wisconsin government – Speaker Vos – deliver? The answer: he didn't want to. He never intended to. And, he made sure the legislature couldn't take meaningful action.

Wisconsin Conservation Voters is a nonpartisan organization. We've endorsed and worked with legislators on both sides of the aisle. We are guided by our values, not by party. Unfortunately, during this legislative session, current Republican leadership blocked action on the environment every step of the way.

We hear these questions often: why is this happening? Why has one party's elected officials abandoned its conservation legacy, its commitment to our natural resources, its investment in our recreation industry, its belief that we should leave things better than when we arrived?

During the 2019-20 legislative session, the answer was pretty clear – decision makers refused to stand up to the absolutism and dogma of Speaker Vos, even when they knew it was the right thing to do.

Republican legislators who allowed this lack of progress on issues that have overwhelming support in their communities are just as guilty as their party leaders. When they enable poor leadership, they become part of the problem.

While this session stands as one of the least productive in recent memory, it does not define who we are as conservation voters, or as a state. You stood up and took action. You contributed to solutions. Because of that, we made progress.

Gov. Tony Evers, despite being stripped of important powers by a lame duck bill pushed by Speaker Vos, issued several important executive orders that confront climate change, fight for clean water, and set the stage for 100 percent carbon-free electricity in the state.

His orders addressed lead and PFAS in drinking water; formed a Climate Change Task Force, led by Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes; and created an initiative to coordinate the effort for fair district maps across the state.

With your help and support, we pushed for clean energy resolutions to be passed at the local level, we elected a pro-conservation supreme court justice, and we have begun a massive push to change the course of history in November.

The extreme partisanship that took over this legislative session doesn't have to last forever. It will take hard work by thousands of people like you, but we have confidence we can reshape Wisconsin and make progress toward safe drinking water for all, an equitable clean energy future, beautiful places to enjoy, and more.

Thank you for being a conservation voter.

While this session stands as one of the least productive in recent memory, it does not define who we are as conservation voters, or as a state.

Vote Tracker

The Conservation Vote Tracker is your source for real-time information on the bills and votes that impact Wisconsin's air, land, water, and public health.

- Bills To Watch**
Keep watch on important bills as they move through the State Capitol, and take action to help propel pro-conservation bills forward.
[START TRACKING](#)
- Track Your Legislators**
Transparency is vital in a healthy democracy. Find out how your legislators are voting on conservation issues, and hold them accountable for their decisions.
[START TRACKING](#)
- Committee Votes**
Committee approvals are a crucial step in the life of a bill. Learn about what committees are voting on, who sits on those committees, and how you can influence their decisions.
[START TRACKING](#)

The Vote Tracker: Your Eyes on the Capitol

The Vote Tracker on the Wisconsin Conservation Voters' website is a powerful tool. From committee votes to bill summaries to actions taken by legislators and the governor, the Vote Tracker serves as your eyes in the State Capitol. The Vote Tracker is updated in real-time, meaning you can get the information you need when it's most important – as a bill is moving through the legislative process. It also provides opportunities for you to weigh in on the issues that matter most through petitions, email messages to lawmakers, and more. Visit conservationvoters.org/vote-tracker.

Overview of Priority Legislation

WATER

Funding for County Conservationists

AB 790/SB 723

Pro-conservation vote: yes

Passed Assembly, Senate never took it up and it died.

Livestock Siting Bill

AB 894/SB 808

Pro-conservation vote: no

The bill passed out of committee. It died when neither body took it up for a full vote.

The CLEAR Act

AB 321/SB 302

Pro-Conservation Vote: yes

No public hearing and the bills died.

Allowing Polluters to Undermine Science in Groundwater Standards

AB 794/SB 708

Pro-conservation vote: no

Passed in Assembly, Senate did not take it up.

The SCHOOLS Bills

SB 423 & 424

Pro-Conservation vote: yes

Both died at the end of the session.

Bonding for Lead Service Line Replacement

AB 399/SB 371

Pro-conservation vote: yes

No public hearing and bills died.

Establishing a Pilot Project for Nitrate Testing

AB 148/SB 137

Pro-conservation vote: no

Bills died at the end of the session.

PFAS in Firefighting Foam

AB 323/SB 310

Pro-conservation vote: neutral

The governor signed the bill into law.

CLIMATE

Undermining the Municipal Flood Control Grant Program

AB 793/SB 711

Pro-conservation vote: no

Senate never scheduled a vote, bills died.

Forward on Climate bills

AB 764 & 766

Pro-conservation vote: yes

Both bills died without a public hearing.

DEMOCRACY

April 2020 Special Session

Pro-conservation vote: yes

No action taken.

The 2018 Lame Duck Session

SB 884

Pro-conservation vote: no

Signed into law by Gov. Walker.

Clean Water

Wisconsin is known for our water.

We boast more than 15,000 lakes and 13,500 miles of navigable streams and rivers. In fact, almost three percent of Wisconsin's area – nearly a million acres – is lakes.

Much of our water, including the water many of us rely on for drinking water, is unseen. Wisconsin has about 1.2 million billion (yes, that's million billion) gallons of water underground. Seven in 10 Wisconsinites and 97 percent of the state's inland communities depend on this groundwater for their drinking water supply.¹

Yet, people across the state struggle with contaminated drinking water every day. Wisconsinites are pushing for clean water that is free from agricultural waste, PFAS, and other contaminants. When the 2019-20 legislative session began, it seemed almost inevitable that the legislature would take swift and decisive action.

Gov. Evers declared 2019 the "Year of Clean Drinking Water" and Speaker Vos created his Speaker's Water Quality Task Force, a bipartisan panel that claimed it was dedicated to protecting a "healthy and stable supply of water for residents and industry."

As the task force, led by Dodgeville Rep. Todd Novak, held a series of listening sessions across the state, that promise began quickly fading as industry insiders, corporate polluters, and the same old cast of anti-conservation organizations like Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and the Dairy Business Association were given an outsized voice in comparison to scientists, health professionals, clean water advocates, and their own constituents – many of whom face grave health effects from polluted water.

In the end, legislators in the majority party ignored their constituents and chose not to tackle the problem of contaminated drinking water, leaving thousands of Wisconsinites without access to safe water in their homes.



Rep. Todd Novak

Chair of the Speaker's Water
Quality Task Force
R-Dodgeville

WHAT THEY SAID

"Clean water is essential to the health of our rural communities, and really, every community in Wisconsin. [It] is not a Republican or Democrat issue, it is a state of Wisconsin issue."

WHAT THEY DID

After taking hours of data and testimony, the task force came up with 13 bills, none of which addressed the root causes of pollution or were taken up by the Republican-led Senate. **In short, the task force was a PR stunt with no new ideas or plans.**

Photo: Rep. Novak's official legislator page, 10/4/19

¹ <https://waterlibrary.aqua.wisc.edu/water-facts/>



Rep. Travis Tranel

Member of the Speaker's
Water Quality Task Force
R-Cuba City

WHAT THEY SAID

"We all want and deserve safe, clean and healthy groundwater ... We look forward to a task force that can identify ways to improve both ground and surface water quality for everyone."

WHAT THEY DID

Despite being from one of the most sensitive districts to agricultural pollution, Rep. Tranel failed to bring anything meaningful to the table and spent the last weeks of the session **trying to weaken water protections** regarding CAFOs (AB 894).

Photo: Rep. Tranel's official legislator page

Manure and Agricultural Pollution

Over the past two years, highly publicized studies in Southwest Wisconsin made it clear that the region has significant problems with nitrates in the water supply. The region is represented in the Assembly by Water Quality Task Force chair Rep. Novak and member Rep. Travis Tranel.

The task force toured the state and heard from citizens concerned about the health impacts of nitrates and other pollutants. While a wide variety of experts were invited to speak about water quality problems, industry lobbyists like Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce worked behind the scenes to make sure they received outsized influence on what legislation was ultimately deemed "acceptable."

By contrast, citizens took time off from work and other commitments, disrupted their lives to testify at hearings, sat through long presentations, and made it very clear they wanted strong solutions. Their voices were not reflected in the legislation the task force drafted.



Nitrates in groundwater are due largely to agricultural activity and are linked to cancer, diabetes, thyroid conditions, birth defects, even infant death. It is estimated nearly 100,000 homes in Wisconsin have wells contaminated with nitrates.²

²<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/groundwater/documents/gcc/gwquality/nitrate.pdf>



Funding for County Conservationists

Assembly Bill 790/Senate Bill 723

Pro-Conservation Vote: Yes

Funding for county conservationists is essential to maintaining clean water protections in communities across the state. County conservationists are truly the boots on the ground when it comes to creating and implementing a wide variety of plans and resources for farmers that are based on local conditions and geography. Starting under the Walker Administration, funding for these critical staff became yet another political football. The reality is, these are some of the most important people working to benefit both clean water and local farmers.

AB 790 was introduced in late January as part of the task force's work and it unanimously passed the full Assembly on their last day of session, but the **Senate never took it up and it died.**



Livestock Siting Bill

Assembly Bill 894

Senate Bill 808

Pro-Conservation Vote: No

Livestock siting rules are crucial in maintaining local control of where large agricultural operations are built. In the waning days of the session, Rep. Tranel and Sen. Howard Marklein introduced SB 808/AB 894, which would have stripped much of that local input in favor of a nine-member panel composed primarily of ag industry insiders.

This would have thwarted any effort to reform outdated siting rules and made it difficult to protect water and quality of life in rural communities. The bill was so controversial that, despite the fact they tried to jam it through after quickly passing it out of the Assembly's Agriculture Committee and the Senate's Agriculture, Revenue, and Financial Institutions Committee, **it died when neither body took it up for a full vote.**

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue & Financial Institutions

NO / PRO-CONSERVATION

Larson, Chris	Risser, Fred
Ringhand, Janis	Smith, Jeff

YES / ANTI-CONSERVATION

Bernier, Kathleen	Marklein, Howard	Testin, Pat
Jacque, Andre	Petrowski, Jerry	

Assembly Committee on Agriculture

NO / PRO-CONSERVATION

Considine, David	Myers, LeKeshia	Vruwink, Don
Kolste, Debra	Spreitzer, Mark	

YES / ANTI-CONSERVATION

Edming, James	Novak, Todd	Tranel, Travis
Kitchens, Joel	Plumer, Jon	VanderMeer, Nancy
Kurtz, Tony	Pronschinske, Treig	
Mursau, Jeffrey	Tauchen, Gary	

Establishing a Pilot Project for Nitrate Testing

Assembly Bill 148/Senate Bill 137

Pro-conservation vote: No

SB 137/AB 148 would have created a pilot program at the Department of Health Services, rather than strengthening and fully funding the well compensation fund that currently exists.

The pilot program would rely heavily on funding filtration systems, which do not work in very high nitrate contamination circumstances and, if not properly maintained, can actually increase nitrate pollution in the drinking water.

Senate Committee

NO / PRO-CONSERVATION

Hansen, Dave

Miller, Mark

YES / ANTI-CONSERVATION

Cowles, Robert

Marklein, Howard

Olsen, Luther



The bills died at the end of the session.

PFAS, an emerging contaminant

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of chemicals resistant to heat, water, and oil. For decades, PFAS have been used for industrial applications and consumer products such as carpeting, food packaging, firefighting foam, and various paper products. Often referred to as “forever chemicals,” PFAS do not breakdown in the environment. There is mounting evidence linking PFAS to a range of negative health effects including cancer, liver damage, decreased fertility, increased risk of asthma, and increased risk of thyroid disease.³

The CLEAR Act

Assembly Bill 321/Senate Bill 302

Pro-Conservation Vote: Yes

The CLEAR Act (SB 302/AB 321) was introduced to address the widening PFAS crisis and would have been one of the most comprehensive PFAS bills in the country. It would have helped clean up the toxic chemicals and served as a model for how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) could quickly address any other emerging contamination for which Wisconsin does not have current environmental protections in place.

The CLEAR Act was introduced by **Sen. Mark Miller, Sen. Dave Hansen, Rep. Chris Taylor, and Rep. Melissa Sargent** in June of 2019 to establish standards to protect drinking water, surface water, groundwater, soil, and air, and required the cleanup of PFAS chemicals. The bills were introduced early in the session and had widespread support among conservation, community, and health groups. They were referred to the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee and the Assembly Environment Committee. **Neither bill received a public hearing and the bills died without any movement.**

Meanwhile, many industry-approved bills quickly worked through the process.

Allowing Polluters to Undermine Science in Groundwater Standards

Assembly Bill 794/Senate Bill 708

Pro-Conservation Vote: No

In contrast to the CLEAR Act, the American Chemistry Council was able to move its "model bill" further along in the legislative process under the auspices of the Speaker's Water Quality Task Force.

Instead of protecting our water resources and our health, this bill would have eroded an existing – and successful – process for setting health standards that relies on independent science and data.

Under the guise of goodwill generated by the Speaker's Water Quality Task Force, AB 794/SB 708 was introduced by Rep. Mary Felkowski and Sen. Andre Jacque. The bill would have, for the first time, required the Department of Health Services (DHS) to solicit input from self-serving parties, like the American Chemistry Council, on how health standards are developed.

The bill was introduced in late January to the Assembly Committee on Government Accountability and Oversight and had a public hearing five days later. Despite strong opposition, and only industry groups supporting, the bill passed out of committee on a party-line vote and passed the full Assembly on a vote of 62-36.

The bill died when the Senate didn't take up any of the Water Quality Task Force Bills at the end of session.

Assembly

NO / PRO-CONSERVATION

Anderson, Jimmy	Emerson, Jodi	Kolste, Debra	Riemer, Daniel	Taylor, Chris
Billings, Jill	Fields, Jason	McGuire, Tip	Sargent, Melissa	Vining, Robin
Bowen, David	Goyke, Evan	Meyers, Beth	Shankland, Katrina	Vruwink, Don
Brostoff, Jonathan	Gruszynski, Staush	Milroy, Nick	Sinicki, Christine	Zamarripa, JoCasta
Cabrera, Marisabel	Haywood, Kalan	Myers, LeKeshia	Spreitzer, Mark	
Considine, David	Hebl, Gary	Neubauer, Greta	Stubbs, Shiela	
Crowley, David	Hesselbein, Dianne	Ohnstad, Tod	Stuck, Amanda	
Doyle, Steve	Hintz, Gordon	Pope, Sony	Subeck, Lisa	

YES / ANTI-CONSERVATION

Allen, Scott	Jagler, John	Mursau, Jeffrey	Rohrkaste, Mike	Thiesfeldt, Jeremy
August, Tyler	James, Jesse	Neylon, Adam	Sanfelippo, Joe	Tittl, Paul
Ballweg, Joan	Katsma, Terry	Novak, Todd	Schraa, Michael	Tranel, Travis
Born, Steve	Kerkman, Samatha	Nygren, John	Skowronski, Ken	Tusler, Ron
Brandtjen, Janel	Kitchens, Joel	Oldenburg, Loren	Snyder, Patrick	VanderMeer, Nancy
Brooks, Robert	Knodl, Daniel	Ott, Jim	Sortwell, Shae	Vorpagel, Tyler
Dittrich, Barbra	Krug, Scott	Petersen, Kevin	Spiros, John	Vos, Robin
Duchow, Cindi	Kuglitsch, Mike	Petryk, Warren	Stafsholt, Rob	Wichgers, Chuck
Edming, James	Kulp, Bob	Plumer, Jon	Steffen, David	Wittke, Robert
Felzkowski, Mary	Kurtz, Tony	Pronschinske, Treig	Steineke, Jim	Zimmerman, Shannon
Gundrum, Rick	Loudenbeck, Amy	Quinn, Romain	Summerfield, Craig	
Horlacher, Cody	Magnafici, Gae	Ramthun, Timonthy	Swearingen, Rob	
Hutton, Rob	Murphy, David	Rodriguez, Jessie	Tauchen, Gary	



PFAS in Firefighting Foam

Assembly Bill 323/Senate Bill 310

Pro-Conservation Vote: Neutral

SB 310 would have required the DNR to write agency rules about limiting the use of PFAS in firefighting foam. However, the bill provides for many exemptions, which means that PFAS could continue to be used in firefighting foam, making the bill largely symbolic.

SB 310 was introduced in July 2019 and referred to the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee and the Assembly Committee on the Environment. The bill had a hearing in both committees. It was voted out of committee and passed the full Senate and Assembly on a voice vote in January.

The governor signed the bill into law on Feb. 6, 2020 as 2019 Wisconsin Act 101.

Lead

While lead in our drinking water is one of the gravest threats to public health, it's also one of the easiest to address and fix: remove lead pipes.

Removing lead pipes requires an investment but is fundamentally important, especially in places where children live and learn. Unfortunately, the legislature – particularly Assembly Speaker Vos – has been unwilling to help families with the costs of replacing lead pipes, even while giving an estimated \$3-4 billion in tax incentives to out-of-state corporations like Foxconn.

The SCHOOLS Bills

Senate Bills 423 & 424

Pro-Conservation Vote: Yes

The SCHOOLS Bills (SB 423/SB 424), introduced by Sen. Rob Cowles, would have required schools, daycares, and summer camps to test for lead in their drinking water.

If they found unsafe levels, those contaminated water sources would be taken offline and replaced with clean water sources.

The Senate adopted SB 423, dealing with lead fixtures in daycares and summer camps. At the same time, the Assembly added the language addressing lead fixtures in schools to another bill that the Senate never took up.

These bills died after the Assembly and Senate failed to take up each other's versions.

So, despite a clear willingness to consider addressing lead fixtures where kids are most likely to be impacted, legislative leadership couldn't be bothered to complete the effort.

As a result of this inaction, kids are no safer from lead pollution after this session than they were two years ago, despite strong public and legislative support to help them. **This failure will have a direct and lasting negative impact on the intelligence, health, and future livelihoods of our children.**



Bonding for Lead Service Line Replacement

Assembly Bill 399/Senate Bill 371

Pro-conservation vote: yes

SB 371/AB 399 would have provided \$40 million in bonding authority for communities to replace lead pipes. The legislation was modeled after language included in Gov. Evers' first biennial state budget – language that was stripped out by the legislature and never received a hearing.

SB 371 was introduced in September of 2019 and referred to the Senate Committee on Utilities and Housing. AB 399 was referred to the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities. **Neither bill was scheduled for a public hearing and the bills died at the end of the session.**





Rep. Mike Kuglitsch

Chair of the Assembly Energy
and Utilities Committee
R-New Berlin

WHAT THEY SAID

"According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, solar installers and wind turbine technicians are currently the fastest growing professions across the country, Wisconsin cannot afford to miss out on this opportunity for job creation."

WHAT THEY DID

Despite his powerful committee position and his clear understanding that Wisconsin must boost its lagging clean energy economy, Kuglitsch did absolutely nothing.

*Photo: Rep. Kuglitsch's
official legislator page*

Climate Change

Climate change is having dramatic impacts in Wisconsin.

Reduced harvests, unprecedented flooding, disrupted wildlife migration, toxic algae blooms in our lakes, degradation of water quality in the Great Lakes, even increased mosquito hatches, are all becoming more acute and serious in Wisconsin.⁴

Climate change is damaging the state's signature industry – agriculture – and its second largest industry - outdoor recreation and tourism. While that would seem to be a reason for legislators on both sides of the aisle to offer solutions, particularly ones that also invest in Wisconsin's lagging energy economy, that wasn't the case.



Forward on Climate Bills

Assembly Bills 764 & 766

Pro-Conservation Vote: Yes

One notable exception was Rep. Greta Neubauer and Rep. David Crowley's package of bills to address aspects of the climate problem.

AB 764 would have created a sustainable agriculture grant program at DATCP designed to support Wisconsin's farmers, reduce fossil fuel usage, and sequester carbon dioxide from our air. AB 766 would have required the Public Service Commission (PSC) to consider the social cost of carbon in its analysis as it decides whether to approve the construction of new utility-scale energy generation facilities, high voltage transmission lines, and certain other public utility projects.

These bills were introduced in January of 2020. Neither bill received a public hearing. More than that, the Assembly Energy and Utilities Committee and the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee did not have a public hearing on a single climate change related bill all session.

The legislature did not have a single hearing on a bill aimed at reducing carbon pollution or that proactively addressed climate change.

⁴August 2016, EPA, "What Climate Change Means for Wisconsin," <https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/climate-change-wi.pdf>

Undermining the Municipal Flood Control Grant Program

Assembly Bill 793/Senate Bill 711

Pro-Conservation Vote: No

These bills would have eliminated the requirement that DNR prioritize municipal flood control grants on projects that would protect public health and safety. They would also require the DNR to consider economic impacts over water quality concerns. These changes would not allow for consideration of future flooding risks, which are only accelerating due to climate change. **It was never scheduled for a vote in the full senate and it died at the end of session.**



Assembly

NO / PRO-CONSERVATION

Anderson, Jimmy	Emerson, Jodi	Kitchens, Joel	Pope, Sondy	Subeck, Lisa
Billings, Jill	Fields, Jason	Kolste, Debra	Riemer, Daniel	Taylor, Chris
Bowen, David	Goyke, Evan	McGuire, Tip	Sargent, Melissa	Vining, Robin
Brostoff, Jonathan	Gruszynski, Staush	Meyers, Beth	Shankland, Katrina	Vruwink, Don
Cabrera, Marisabel	Haywood, Kalan	Milroy, Nick	Sinicki, Christine	Zamarripa, JoCasta
Considine, David	Hebl, Gary	Myers, LeKeshia	Spreitzer, Mark	
Crowley, David	Hesselbein, Dianne	Neubauer, Greta	Stubbs, Shiela	
Doyle, Steve	Hintz, Gordon	Ohnstad, Tod	Stuck, Amanda	

YES / ANTI-CONSERVATION

Allen, Scott	Jagler, John	Mursau, Jeffrey	Rodriguez, Jessie	Swearingen, Rob
August, Tyler	James, Jesse	Neylon, Adam	Rohrkaste, Mike	Tauchen, Gary
Ballweg, Joan	Katsma, Terry	Novak, Todd	Sanfelippo, Joe	Thiesfeldt, Jeremy
Brandtjen, Janel	Kerkman, Samatha	Nygren, John	Schraa, Michael	Tittl, Paul
Brooks, Robert	Knodl, Daniel	Oldenburg, Loren	Skowronski, Ken	Tranel, Travis
Dittrich, Barbara	Krug, Scott	Ott, Jim	Snyder, Patrick	Tusler, Ron
Duchow, Cindi	Kuglitsch, Mike	Petersen, Kevin	Sortwell, Shae	VanderMeer, Nancy
Edming, James	Kulp, Bob	Petryk, Warren	Spiros, John	Vorpagel, Tyler
Felzkowski, Mary	Kurtz, Tony	Plumer, Jon	Stafsholt, Rob	Vos, Robin
Gundrum, Rick	Loudenbeck, Amy	Pronschinske, Treig	Steffen, David	Wichgers, Chuck
Horlacher, Cody	Magnafici, Gae	Quinn, Romain	Steineke, Jim	Wittke, Robert
Hutton, Rob	Murphy, David	Ramthun, Timothy	Summerfield, Craig	Zimmerman, Shannon



Voters in Green Bay faced long lines and potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus during the April 7 primary.

Democracy

The April election was held during a global pandemic and under a stay-at-home order from the governor – a dire indication that democracy in Wisconsin is broken and that it must be fixed.

When thousands of people across the state are forced to vote in person at great risk to their own personal safety and the safety of all of us, it's crystal clear this is an emergency situation. And it has risen to the level of life or death.

This reckless move by the legislature – particularly Speaker Vos and Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald – is the most extreme extension of their concerted and long running campaign to deny people a voice in their own government.

The court challenges to the election begun by Vos and Fitzgerald led to the State and U.S. Supreme Courts making rulings, parts of which were incongruous and confusing. The election went ahead due to the state court and the U.S. court being stacked with activist justices.

Still, conservation voters turned out via absentee and in-person, voting at great risk to their lives and livelihoods to reject the anti-conservation candidate for Wisconsin Supreme Court and elect Jill Karofsky, the Wisconsin Conservation Voters-endorsed candidate.

April 2020 Special Session

Pro-Conservation Vote: Yes

An April 2020 Special Session would have allowed legislators and the governor to provide clear guidance to voters about how the election would proceed during the pandemic. Any legislation considered could have allowed voters the opportunity to vote from home by sending an absentee ballot to every registered voter, facilitating drop boxes for voters to safely deposit ballots, and moving the date for in-person voting to a time when systems were in place to make sure that all voters could vote safely and local governments could handle the additional workload.

Gov. Evers issued an executive order on April 3 to call for a Special Session on elections to convene on April 4.

The Senate and Assembly did not take any action on the executive order.

The 2018 Lame Duck Session

2017-18 SB 884

Pro-Conservation Vote: No

SB 884 contained extensive changes to agency rulemaking that undermine core protections for Wisconsin's lakes and rivers, air quality, and drinking water. This comes at a time when thousands of Wisconsinites can't drink their tap water, our lakes are filled with toxic green algae, and our air quality is worsening.

SB 884 was introduced by the Joint Finance Committee on November 30, 2018, after Gov. Evers had been elected but before he had taken office. The bill purposely handcuffed Evers to maintain the legislature's power. **It was signed into law by Gov. Walker as 2017 Wisconsin Act 369. See vote chart on page 17.**

The 2018 Lame Duck Session

2017-18 SB 884

Assembly

NO / PRO-CONSERVATION

Barca, Peter	Doyle, Steve	Hintz, Gordon	Riemer, Daniel	Taylor, Chris
Billings, Jill	Fields, Jason	Kessler, Fred	Sargent, Melissa	Vining, Robin
Bowen, David	Genrich, Eric	Meyers, Beth	Shankland, Katrina	Vruwink, Don
Brostoff, Jonathan	Goyke, Evan	Milroy, Nick	Spreitzer, Mark	Zamarripa, JoCasta
Considine, David	Hebl, Gary	Neubauer, Greta	Stuck, Amanda	Zepnick, Josh
Crowley, David	Hesselbein, Dianne	Pope, Sony	Subeck, Lisa	

YES / ANTI-CONSERVATION

August, Tyler	Jagler, John	Murphy, David	Rohrkaste, Mike	Tittl, Paul
Bernier, Kathy	Katsma, Terry	Mursau, Jeffrey	Sanfelippo, Joe	Tranel, Travis
Born, Steve	Kerkman, Samatha	Nerison, Lee	Schraa, Michael	Tusler, Ron
Brandtjen, Janel	Kitchens, Joel	Neylon, Adam	Skowronski, Ken	VanderMeer, Nancy
Brooks, Robert	Kleefisch, Joel	Novak, Todd	Snyder, Patrick	Vorpapel, Tyler
Duchow, Cindi	Knodl, Daniel	Nygren, John	Stafsholt, Rob	Vos, Robin
Edming, James	Kooyenga, Dale	Ott, Jim	Steffen, David	Weatherston, Tom
Felzkowski, Mary	Krug, Scott	Petersen, Kevin	Steineke, Jim	Wichgers, Chuck
Gundrum, Rick	Kuglitsch, Mike	Plumer, Jon	Summerfield, Craig	Wittke, Robert
Horlacher, Cody	Kulp, Bob	Pronschinske, Treig	Swearingen, Rob	Zimmerman, Shannon
Hutton, Rob	Loudenbeck, Amy	Quinn, Romain	Tauchen, Gary	
Jacque, Andre	Macco, John	Rodriguez, Jessie	Thiesfeldt, Jeremy	

ABSENT / NO VOTE

Allen, Scott	Brooks, Ed	Ohnstad, Tod	Subeck, Lisa
Anderson, Jimmy	Jarchow, Adam	Petryk, Warren	Vruwink, Don
Ballweg, Joan	Kolste, Debra	Sinicki, Christine	Wachs, Dana
Berceau, Therse	Kremer, Jesse	Spiros, John	Young, Leon

Senate

NO / PRO-CONSERVATION

Bewley, Janet	Frostman, Caleb	Miller, Mark	Shilling, Jennifer
Carpenter, Tim	Hansen, Dave	Ringhand, Janis	Taylor, Lena
Cowles, Robert	Johnson, LaTonya	Risser, Fred	Vinehout, Kathleen
Erpenbach, Jon	Larson, Chris	Schachtner, Patty	Wirch, Robert

YES / ANTI-CONSERVATION

Craig, David	Kapenga, Chris	Nass, Steve	Stroebel, Duey	Wanggaard, Van
Darling, Alberta	LeMahieu, Devin	Olsen, Luther	Testin, Pat	
Feyen, Dan	Marklein, Howard	Petrowski, Jerry	Tiffany, Tom	
Fitzgerald, Scott	Moulton, Terry	Roth, Roger	Vukmir, Leah	

Governor's Actions

A bright spot over the past two years has been actions by Gov. Evers and his administration. Along with Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, Gov. Evers has made safe drinking water, climate action, and sound science priorities for his administration.

Agricultural Pollution

Gov. Evers requested that agencies begin the rule-making process for a set of manure management rules called NR151. This resulted in the DNR Board voting to begin updating NR 151 in December 2019.

NR151 is an important tool to address nitrates in ground and surface water and will allow Wisconsin to take the next step to reduce this dangerous pollution. This is an expansion from recent changes to the NR151 rules, which were limited to just the eastern side of the state. The rules are now being proposed statewide.

Lead

Gov. Tony Evers took action to protect children from the devastating effects of lead exposure by signing an executive order that created a new inter-agency coordinator. Executive Order 36 created "a position within the Department of Health Services (DHS) to serve as the coordinator of the state's efforts to address Wisconsin's lead crisis through collaboration across state agencies and within the department."

It also directed DHS to provide "all necessary staffing and resources to create collaboration among local health departments and community organizations to inform and protect Wisconsinites against the public health risks of lead poisoning."

PFAS

Gov. Evers issued Executive Order 40 to address PFAS, a group of chemicals that are extremely dangerous to

human health. The order directs the state to collaborate with municipalities to identify potential sources of PFAS, expand monitoring, and keep the public informed about PFAS in water.

Climate Change

Very soon after taking office, Gov. Evers joined the U.S. Climate Alliance, where he joined governors from across the country by committing to implementing policies that advance the goals of the Paris Agreement, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

Gov. Evers issued Executive Order 52 establishing the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change. The task force, headed up by Lt. Gov. Barnes, was developed to advise and assist the governor in developing a strategy to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change for the benefit of all Wisconsin communities. Wisconsin Conservation Voters' Executive Director Kerry Schumann was appointed as a member of the task force.



Conservation Dishonor Roll: Speaker Robin Vos

We know people all around the state can't drink their water – even members of Speaker Vos' own caucus have raised this concern. But, rather than look out for the health of Wisconsinites, Speaker Vos set up a sham task force that didn't deliver on any of the issues people are struggling with. He set up the task force to score political points while not actually requiring polluters to clean up their act.

Speaker Vos also showed his complete disregard for the health and safety of voters by challenging a delay of the April primary election, which forced people to vote in-person during a global pandemic. Speaker Vos' move was racist, politically motivated, and put even his own constituents at great risk.

To add insult to injury, Speaker Vos volunteered as an "election inspector" at a local polling place in his district

wearing head-to-toe personal protective equipment (PPE) saying on camera that it was "incredibly safe" to go out and vote. The image went viral after we shared it on our Facebook page where it reached more than 500,000 people and more than 4,000 of them shared it. The same image and a video reached media outlets across the globe as an example of the hypocrisy and sheer cruelty of the moment – and served as another international embarrassment to Wisconsin's reputation.

Again and again, Speaker Vos masqueraded bullying and division as "leadership" and the majority party went along unquestioningly.

It's clear that Speaker Vos prioritizes his own ego over the best outcomes for his constituents. He is this year's lone inductee to the Conservation Dishonor Roll.



Photo: Lehnmat, under CC SA 4.0 license

Conservation Honor Roll

Rep. Greta Neubauer (1) and **Rep. David Crowley** (2) for their climate change package. Rep. Neubauer and Rep. Crowley's Forward on Climate bill package looked to address the social impacts of climate change as well as implementing innovative solutions as addressed above. Rep. Neubauer also serves on the Governor's Climate Change Task Force.

Sen. Mark Miller (3) and **Sen. Dave Hansen** (4), and **Rep. Chris Taylor** (5) and **Rep. Melissa Sargent** (6) for the CLEAR Act. Their work on the CLEAR Act is an example of leadership on an emerging health issue. They recognized the full scope of the health impacts of PFAS and were willing to engage in dialogue on an issue the state needs to address as we discover more and more hot spots throughout Wisconsin. Their bill would have been one of the strongest policies in the nation and is now the

standard other efforts on PFAS will be judged against.

Gov. Tony Evers (7) and **Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes** (8) enacted numerous important initiatives to address some of the state's most pressing conservation issues and challenges.

Despite his power being attacked by the majority party in both houses of the state legislature, Gov. Evers issued executive orders that have begun to address the PFAS crisis, formed a climate change task force headed by Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, created an Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy, addressed lead contamination, and declared 2019 the "Year of Clean Drinking Water."

Both Gov. Evers and Lt. Gov. Barnes committed to conservation values early in their candidacies and have lived up to their promises.



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4



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6



7



8



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Address Service Requested



Be a Conservation Voter

People Power is how we win – and you can make it happen.

Every day, Wisconsin Conservation Voters are standing up for clean drinking water, protected lands, safe air to breathe, a just democracy, and a clean energy future.

Join our movement. Give monthly, make a one-time donation, join our major donor team, volunteer – and take action!

Thank you!

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