

Spring/Summer 2022 • Vol. 18 • No. 1

CONSERVATION VOTER



Wisconsin
Conservation
Voters

**Our first wave
of endorsements
are here**

**A deep dive into
Gov. Tony Evers'
Clean Energy Plan**
And what it means for
Wisconsin

**Our endorsement
process**
How do we choose?

Wisconsin Conservation Voters staff and board march in the June 2021 Menominee Water Celebration.



MOVING THE NEEDLE

Building momentum on clean energy, clean water, and democracy

It's no secret that we have a state legislature jammed up by partisan politics and an extremist GOP caucus, but that hasn't stopped us from moving the needle on clean water, clean energy, and voting access through other avenues.

Local communities are stepping up and committing to 100 percent clean energy. The federal government has approved millions of dollars of infrastructure money that local communities can use to replace lead pipes, invest in energy efficiency, or make other investments in making their communities healthier.

Gov. Tony Evers is using executive action to make progress on clean energy and clean water, and Attorney General Josh Kaul is using the power of his office to defend our environment.

The bottom line: we are making measurable progress under some of the most challenging political and cultural circumstances in decades. Your support is what drives that progress.

Now, this fall, we'll be facing another tough election season – one that will have repercussions reaching far beyond Wisconsin and lasting for years to come.

Thanks to you, our members and supporters, we're already mounting what will be the most robust election program in our organization's history. To win these elections we need to go big. Very big.

We've got some great conservation champions running for office, but, as you know, they're up against extremists who have taken over much of your state government (**see page 6 for the first of our endorsed candidates!**). Dark money backing our opponents keeps pouring in from out-of-state polluters and other special interests.

But, Wisconsin Conservation Voters members are a tenacious bunch. **We're fighting back with people power.** Your dollars are turned into savvy, research-based communication with hundreds of thousands of voters across the state through conversations at their doors and through phone calls and texts, candidate support, social media campaigns, direct mailings, TV and radio advertising, coalition building, our legislative scorecard, conservation lobby days, and so much more. It takes every conceivable tactic to fight effectively. This fall, together, we're going to do just that.

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ELECTING CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Local elections remain essential to building progress – and this spring proved it. Across Wisconsin, many candidates ran on diminishing your freedom to vote, weakening environmental protections, and reversing progress on environmental justice.

Despite this extremism, **you helped elect conservation champions in communities around the state.** Our endorsed candidates fought positive, issue-based campaigns. Even in the biggest races with the most money, conservation voters helped to shift the narrative – and win.

Your support made a real impact. The February election was the first local primary in which Wisconsin Conservation Voters ever endorsed candidates – and all six of those endorsed candidates won their races. In the April spring election, we endorsed a record 106 candidates. **With our help, more than 70 won.**

Local leaders can make a clear impact on the conservation issues you care most about. In Eau Claire, a majority of endorsed candidates won and will continue to grow the city as a leader

in climate action. All of our Appleton endorsed candidates won their races and now Wisconsin Conservation Voters staff are working with the city to help foster its transition to 100 percent clean energy. In La Crosse County, we defended a pro-conservation majority against heavy opposition spending. Our success in Portage County will elevate and address clean water issues there.

Your membership powers one of the most active and effective forces fighting for our climate and democracy in the state. Wisconsin will again be a swing state with enormous electoral impact – and in November, the stakes will be only higher. Thank you for voting, being part of the conservation voter

Thomas Vue

for Eau Claire County Board District 17

endorsed by
Wisconsin Conservation Voters



Thomas Vue was elected April 5!

Mark your calendars. The fall primary election is Aug. 9 and the general election is Nov. 8. For more information on our election progress see page 6.

movement, and for making our state a better place to live and prosper.

To win in November and to maintain Gov. Evers' critical veto power, your voice, action, and support is crucial. If you haven't yet, sign up for our emails to stay in the know on conservation news and actions to take. If you're already on the list, ask your friends to join you. You can sign up and share this link: conservationvoters.org/sign-up-for-our-emails.

Thank you for being a conservation voter.

JOIN US

conservationvoters.org/events



WISCONSIN NATIVE VOTE IS GROWING ITS IMPACT

In recent years, Wisconsin Native Vote, a program of our sister 501c3 organization Wisconsin Conservation Voices, has built profound progress in tribal communities across Wisconsin.

And, it's growing even stronger in 2022.

Wisconsin Native Vote has increased voter turnout in tribal communities by double digits. Consider these voter turnout numbers from 2020:

- A 28 percent increase in Red Cliff
- A six percent increase in Bad River
- An 18 percent increase in Mole Lake
- A 24 percent increase in Menominee
- An 11 percent increase in Stockbridge

In 2022, we'll keep that momentum growing. The Native Vote program will build on the strength of relationships with tribal leaders, incorporate art and influencers to create compelling and engaging communication, and focus on authentic, deep conversations directly with voters.



In February, Native Vote and Wisconsin Conservation Voices staff attended the annual State of the Tribes Address in Madison. Staff worked with tribal leaders to create a video urging people to vote. You can view the video at this link: conservationvoices.org/nativevote.



Thanks to your support, the program is growing too.

Anne Egan-Waukau recently joined the team as the Urban Native Vote Organizer. She builds relationships with Indigenous community members in and around Milwaukee. Anne was born and raised on the Menominee Reservation and will continue the legacy of her father, Hilary "Sparky" Waukau, in advocating for Indigenous communities and environmental protection.

The Wisconsin Native Vote program is a spectacular example of what's possible with your support. Your generosity and action built this movement from the ground up, and the results continue to provide both inspiration and deep progress on voter turnout in communities that have been historically disenfranchised.

Learn more about Wisconsin Native Vote at the Wisconsin Conservation Voices website: conservationvoices.org/nativevote.

A HELPFUL TIP FOR DONORS OVER 70



Your financial support is what allows us to fight for Wisconsin's environment and democracy every day. If you are age 70 ½ or older, you can give to our 501c3 organization, Wisconsin Conservation Voices, directly from your IRA by making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). Wisconsin Conservation Voices is nonpartisan and registers, educates, and engages voters and works to end practices that disenfranchise voters. Wisconsin Conservation Voices runs the Native Vote program.



What is a Qualified Charitable Distribution?

Money that you receive out of your IRA counts as taxable income. However, if you instead donate money directly from your IRA to a qualified charity, the money you donate (up to \$100,000 annually) is not considered taxable income to you and so you do not owe income taxes on it.

How To Donate With a Qualified Charitable Distribution

Your plan administrator must send the donation directly to Wisconsin Conservation Voices on your behalf. Contact your plan administrator and request the appropriate form to make a qualified charitable distribution. Requirements may vary by plan, but most forms will require the following information:

- **Organization Name:** Wisconsin Conservation Voices
- **Address:** 133 S. Butler St. #320, Madison, WI 53703
- **Tax ID or EIN:** 73-1628891
- **Contact Person:** Jennifer Williamson, Development Director, 608-208-1131, jwilliamson@conservationvoters.org

If you need additional information please contact us. This information is provided for educational purposes only and should not be considered tax or legal advice. Please consult with your financial and/or legal advisor(s).





SEE THE CONSERVATION SCORECARD

conservationvoters.org/scorecards

OUR FIRST WAVE OF ENDORSEMENTS ARE HERE

The Wisconsin Conservation Voters Board of Directors kicked off the fall election season by endorsing a slate of incumbents who have consistently fought for our environment and democracy. We'll continue to endorse candidates in July and August, so keep an eye on your email for more announcements. And help us make sure these candidates make it over the finish line by donating at conservationvoters.org/donate.

Statewide Office

Governor Tony Evers
Attorney General Josh Kaul

State Senate

Tim Carpenter, Senate District 3
Chris Larson, Senate District 7
Mark Spritzer, Senate District 15
Dianne Hesselbein, Senate District 27
Jeff Smith, Senate District 31

State Assembly

Daniel Riemer, Assembly District 7
Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Assembly District 8
Robyn Vining, Assembly District 14
Evan Goyke, Assembly District 18
Christine Sinicki, Assembly District 20

Deb Andraca, Assembly District 23
Don Vruwink, Assembly District 33
Sue Conley, Assembly District 44
Jimmy Anderson, Assembly District 47
Samba Baldeh, Assembly District 48
Lee Snodgrass, Assembly District 57
Tip McGuire, Assembly District 64
Tod Ohnstad, Assembly District 65
Greta Neubauer, Assembly District 66
Katrina Shankland, Assembly District 71
Francesca Hong, Assembly District 76
Shelia Stubbs, Assembly District 77
Lisa Subeck, Assembly District 78
Dave Considine, Assembly District 81
Kristina Shelton, Assembly District 90
Jodi Emerson, Assembly District 91
Steve Doyle, Assembly District 94
Jill Billings, Assembly District 95

A HISTORIC FIRST FOR PFAS STANDARDS

Because of your hard work and support, Wisconsin has standards to protect our water from PFAS for the first time ever.

PFAS are a group of highly toxic human-made chemicals linked to many negative health effects, including cancer, thyroid disease, and growth impairment. Often referred to as “forever chemicals,” PFAS do not break down in the environment and are being discovered in drinking water in an increasing number of communities around Wisconsin.

When Gov. Tony Evers started the rulemaking process to set standards for PFAS, Wisconsin Conservation Voters and our allies and members worked overtime to ensure these rules passed the Natural Resources Board and a legislative committee. **We were proud to see you – conservation voters – fighting for safe water** by signing petitions, testifying at hearings, and showing up at events.

It worked! **These PFAS rules are a significant step toward making sure all Wisconsinites have access to clean, safe drinking water.** For the first time ever, community testing standards will make sure fewer people in Wisconsin have to worry that the water coming from their taps will make them or their children sick.



And there's more! **Pres. Joe Biden's bipartisan infrastructure bill is the largest investment in water infrastructure in generations.** It includes \$12.8 million a year per year for five years to remove the threats of these emerging contaminants from our drinking water.

At Wisconsin Conservation Voters, we'll work with local elected officials in communities across Wisconsin to take advantage of the infrastructure money to protect our health and deliver on clean water solutions.

All of us deserve access to safe, clean drinking water. This historic step towards creating PFAS water standards brings us closer to achieving that. Thank you for raising your voice for a healthier future for all Wisconsinites.



BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Issis Macias, Madison

I support Wisconsin Conservation Voters because I'm excited to work alongside conservation-minded individuals who are committed to bringing people together to advocate for the environment.

I've spent most of my life working on initiatives that protect water and inspire communities to conserve it. In Wisconsin, with its abundance of water (15,000+ lakes) and nature, there's more work to be done to preserve the environment and ensure equitable access to clean water.

It's time we all do our part and challenge the status quo. We need your support to advocate for an equitable democracy that works for all of us and prioritizes a healthy environment!

What Gov. Evers' Clean Energy Plan means for Wisconsin

In April, Gov. Tony Evers made history by releasing the Clean Energy Plan and creating the Office of Environmental Justice. These actions put Wisconsin on course for a healthier, more equitable future.

The Clean Energy Plan constitutes **the strongest roadmap to climate justice and clean energy in Wisconsin history**. It aids our local clean energy resolutions and supports the transition to 100 percent clean energy, providing a pathway for ending Wisconsin's long-standing dependence on fossil fuels.

"Gov. Evers gathered input from Tribal Nations, frontline communities, and other groups to develop equitable solutions that address the needs of everyone in the state."

The Clean Energy Plan rightly prioritizes equity and justice. Gov. Evers gathered input from Tribal Nations, frontline communities, and other groups to develop equitable solutions that address the needs of everyone in the state. Wisconsin currently sends \$14 billion out of state for fossil fuels. **Investing in clean energy workforce development at home will lift us all** – especially communities most impacted by climate change. The plan includes job training programs and estimates that over 40,000 new jobs will be created by 2030.

Gov. Evers built on the ambition of the Clean Energy Plan with the **creation of the Office of Environmental Justice**. The Office of Environmental Justice is a permanent state office that will work with and support

communities that have been historically disenfranchised in the fight against climate change. It is a vital step toward addressing generations of harm and to dismantling systems that threaten the wellbeing of these communities.

The creation of the Clean Energy Plan and the Office of Environmental Justice were longtime goals of Wisconsin Conservation Voters. Our work for clean energy, clean water, and a robust, equitable democracy are strengthened with their creation.

And, Wisconsin Conservation Voters has been right there at the forefront from the start. **Executive Director Kerry Schumann was appointed to Gov. Evers' Climate Change Task Force**, our government affairs program prioritized environmental justice in our state budget work, and our field staff has worked side-by-side with the Evers Administration and lawmakers across the state.

Your work volunteering, showing up at events, and taking action to demand climate progress and justice made these achievements happen. This also couldn't have happened without Gov. Evers. Despite anti-conservation and anti-democracy majorities in the state legislature, **Gov. Evers is making progress on climate and justice.**

We need you to stay involved as we prepare for the November election, when Gov. Evers is on the ballot. It is critical to re-elect the governor and protect his veto power in the legislature.

The work to re-elect Gov. Evers is already underway; you can sign up to volunteer at conservationvoters.org/volunteer.





RE-ELECTING GOV. EVERS COULD NOT BE MORE URGENT

to bring PFAS water standards to the state, created the PFAS Coordinating Council to facilitate a state response to the PFAS crisis, and distributed funds for testing municipal water supplies. He continues to find creative solutions to protecting our communities from PFAS until stronger state and federal standards are passed.

Gov. Evers made history with the recent release of the state's Clean Energy Plan, which will **put Wisconsin on a path to 100 percent clean energy by 2050**. The Clean Energy Plan charts the transition to clean energy while creating thousands of jobs and uplifting communities most harmed by climate change. **You can read more about the governor's Clean Energy Plan on page 8.**

Gov. Evers' work was boosted by Atty. Gen. Josh Kaul, who joined important lawsuits to protect our water and hold corporate polluters accountable over their failure to address and clean up PFAS in Marinette.

Gov. Evers is also fighting to protect the right to vote and Wisconsin's democracy. Wisconsin is one of the most heavily gerrymandered states in the country. Republican majorities in the state legislature relentlessly attacked our freedom to vote, passing bills that would have made it more difficult to cast your ballot. Gov. Evers fought back, **vetoing every anti-voter bill that made it to his desk**. Without those vetoes, Wisconsin's future would look very dark, indeed.

Re-electing Gov. Evers could not be more important or more urgent.

Protecting our drinking water from PFAS. Creating a state Clean Energy Plan and an Office of Environmental Justice. Vetoing dozens of bills that would have eroded our democracy and weakened environmental protections.

In his first three years in office, Gov. Tony Evers has been a constant champion and important ally, consistently working for clean water, clean energy, and an equitable democracy. Gov. Evers has proven that who we elect matters. We need to ensure Gov. Evers is re-elected so he can continue to help us move the needle on the issues you care about – climate change, clean water, environmental justice, democracy, and more.

One of Gov. Evers' first actions was **declaring 2019 the Year of Clean Drinking Water**, and subsequently directing resources to protect our drinking water. His creation of a coordinator position at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services provided resources and focus to **protect Wisconsinites against the public health risks of lead poisoning**.

As we learn more about the extent of PFAS in our water and its threat to our health, Gov. Evers is responding in kind. Gov. Evers **kickstarted the rulemaking process**

MEET JENNIFER WILLIAMSON

Your new Development Director

As a Wisconsin Conservation Voters supporter, you know how important every dollar of financial support is for protecting our water, air, land, and democracy. Our Development Director is key to ensuring the success of our fundraising efforts, and we feel so fortunate to have added an experienced, talented person to take on that role. Meet Jennifer Williamson - our new Development Director. Jennifer manages a comprehensive fundraising plan and strategy that includes working with donors to plan leadership gifts, membership recruitment and retention, board and staff fundraising, direct mail appeals, events, and planned giving. Here's what she had to say about her new role:

What's one thing you want Wisconsin Conservation Voters supporters to know?

You're going to keep hearing that your support is needed more than ever. And that's going to be true for quite some time! We are confronting huge problems and there are no easy solutions. But giving up is not an option. It's up to us - you, me, all of us in this movement of conservation voters - to keep hope alive for our environment and our democracy. To never give up. You can count on Wisconsin Conservation Voters to stay in the fight and continue to be your best guide to make your vote, your voice, your time, and your gifts do the most good.

"It's up to us - you, me, all of us in this movement of conservation voters - to keep hope alive for our environment and our democracy."

Tell us about the experience you bring to your role at Wisconsin Conservation Voters:

I've worked in the nonprofit sector for more than 20 years on issues including migrant farmworker health, worker and immigrant rights, global hunger, domestic poverty, and refugee mental health. At every turn, I've met people whose lives have been transformed through

the partnership of bold and creative organizations and generous donors. This has been the greatest reward of my career.



Why are you a conservation voter?

I was born and raised in a rural community, and I now live in Dodgeville with my husband and two children. Climate change endangers the natural beauty of the Driftless Area I call home and the agricultural livelihoods of my neighbors. There are families in my county that don't have clean drinking water in their homes due to pollution. Across our state and our globe these same problems are even more dire and governments are failing to respond. I'm a conservation voter because we need elected leaders at every level who understand the urgency and will work to protect nature, ensure all people can meet their basic needs, and save our planet from climate change for the sake of future generations.

How can supporters get in touch with you?

Have you ever found yourself saying, "I wish there was more I could do?" Let's talk. I would love to know why YOU are a conservation voter. If you could see yourself supporting this work in a bigger way, I'd love to talk with you about where your support could have the most impact. I'm always happy to schedule a phone call or meeting. Please reach out to me at jwilliamson@conservationvoters.org or 608-208-1131.

OUR ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

How do we choose?

Endorsements are the foundation of Wisconsin Conservation Voters' political work. An endorsement carries weight – it shapes statewide debate and makes an impact in elections.

Wisconsin Conservation Voters endorses candidates who share your values and will fight for clean water, clean air, accessible public lands, an equitable democracy, and the pursuit of clean energy.

It's essential to endorse where impact is high and candidates will draw attention to the issues that matter most to you – and Wisconsin. Whether endorsing a city council candidate, a legislative candidate, or the governor, the goals are the same: elect pro-conservation and pro-democracy candidates and build power to move the state forward.

There is a rigorous process before deciding to endorse in any given race. Candidates fill out questionnaires and participate in an interview with members of our Board of Directors and staff. Our staff and board take a hard look at the political landscape and the demographics and voting history of each race. Ultimately, the board makes the final endorsement decisions

As Wisconsin Conservation Voters continues to grow, the capacity to influence more races also grows. This year marked a historic first. Wisconsin Conservation Voters endorsed in local primaries, and endorsed in a record 106 races in the April election. That capacity is thanks to you, our members, and supporters.

Be assured, **Wisconsin Conservation Voters will continue to hold candidates to high standards** to ensure the seal of endorsement remains a coveted and influential part of any Wisconsin election. Every endorsement strives to build a healthier, brighter future for everyone in Wisconsin.



Be a Sustainer with a monthly gift that helps protect our environment and democracy. Donate today online or use the enclosed envelope.



[conservationvoters.org/
give-monthly](https://conservationvoters.org/give-monthly)



**STAY UP TO
DATE ON OUR
ENDORSEMENTS**

conservationvoters.org/elections

Wisconsin Conservation Voters

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Join us for an unforgettable night on Sept. 22, 2022 at Discovery World. This is our biggest conservation event of the year, and we don't want you to miss it! Get your tickets now at conservationvoters.org/gtg22.

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SAVE THE DATE
September 22, 2022

GREENTIE GALA

In person once again at Discovery World in Milwaukee!