



**Wisconsin  
Conservation  
Voters**

## **2025-2027 Budget Recommendations**

The state budget and legislative agenda should uphold Wisconsin's strong commitment to conservation and democratic values, reflecting the priorities of its people.

### **Increasing collaboration among local, state, and Tribal governments**

The state of Wisconsin partners with local and tribal governments to enhance quality of life by fostering collaboration, sharing resources, and implementing joint funding initiatives.

- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$1,484,800 proposal to establish a Director of Native American Affairs at the Department of Administration (DOA) and create Tribal Liaison positions at DOA, DATCP, DOC, DOJ, DNR, PSC, Tourism, and DWD. These roles will strengthen partnerships with Tribal nations and work to ensure their voices are heard in state decision-making.
- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$822,400 proposal to fund a five-person local government grant resource team at DOA. This team will help communities maximize federal grant opportunities to secure safe drinking water and advance clean energy initiatives.

### **Water**

Too many Wisconsinites lack access to clean, safe drinking water. Aging infrastructure and rising pollution have pushed this issue to crisis levels. From PFAS contamination and lead poisoning that harms children's brain development to manure pollution forcing families to dig costly new wells, unsafe water is an urgent and growing threat to communities across the state.

- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal to authorize \$725.9 million in revenue bonds will fund state match requirements and expand loan opportunities through the Drinking Water Loan Program and the Clean Water Fund Program. This critical investment will support much-needed drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure across Wisconsin.

### **Protecting our drinking water from PFAS**

PFAS contamination is a growing public health crisis, with serious consequences linked to exposure. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control warn that PFAS increases the risk of testicular and kidney cancer, elevates cholesterol levels, causes liver damage, reduces infant birth weights, and raises the likelihood of high blood pressure in pregnant women.

Across Wisconsin, 92 public water systems are struggling with the high costs of addressing contamination and complying with new federal health-based limits. Meanwhile, one-third of Wisconsinites rely on private wells, which often lack protections against PFAS pollution. As more communities uncover contamination through testing, they will need substantial funding and technical support to ensure clean, safe drinking water for all.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$143,606,400 proposal for the DNR to support PFAS monitoring and remediation across Wisconsin. This will provide support for sampling, research, public health interventions, emergency response, and disposal activities.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$1,445,400 proposal for the DHS to conduct biomonitoring studies across the state to assess PFAS exposure levels and better understand the factors that affect PFAS levels in residents of different communities.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal to modify current law to ensure the DNR is able to promulgate PFAS water quality standards that protect public health.

### **Protecting our drinking water from lead**

Lead poisoning poses a severe and lifelong threat to children's health, causing irreversible brain damage and developmental delays. Many young children, whether in childcare centers or their own homes, are unknowingly exposed to lead-contaminated water. While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a foundation for tackling this crisis, Wisconsin still faces a major funding gap to fully comply with the new federal Lead and Copper Rule Improvements. With a 10-year mandate to replace all lead service lines, the state must secure significant resources to protect children and ensure safe drinking water for all.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$200,000,000 proposal to support lead service line replacement through the DNR's Safe Drinking Water Loan program.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$7,100,000 proposal for DCF to establish a child care water safety grant program, which will aid Milwaukee County child care providers in accessing safe drinking water.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$6,267,000 proposal for DHS lead poisoning prevention and response. This will provide funding to local health departments to support additional lead hazard investigations for children.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$2,500 water filtration grant proposal for DPI to assist school districts to replace water fountains with water bottle filling stations with filters that reduce harmful toxins, such as lead and nitrates, in student drinking water.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal to modify current law to allow utilities to provide financial assistance in the form of 100 percent grant funding for the replacement of lead service lines for property owners.

### **Protecting our Drinking Water from Manure**

Manure from industrial agribusiness is loaded with harmful pathogens, bacteria, and chemicals that, when mismanaged, pollute Wisconsin's groundwater, lakes, and streams – posing serious health risks. Nitrate contamination, in particular, has been linked to cancer, birth defects, and even infant death. This crisis disproportionately affects the one-third of Wisconsinites who rely on private wells, with an estimated 42,000 wells exceeding the health standard for nitrate. Without urgent action, more families will face the devastating consequences of unsafe drinking water.

▶ **Support** \$20,200,000 in funding for the Department of Trade, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to support county conservationists who provide essential testing and monitoring services across Wisconsin. These departments assist with designing and constructing manure storage facilities, help establish conservation cropping practices, and aid in nutrient management planning.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$10,000,000 bonding proposal for infrastructure projects under DNR's Targeted Runoff Management program (TRM), which provides assistance to communities for infrastructure projects that reduce nonpoint source pollution.

▶ **Support** an additional \$10,000,000 bonding proposal for DATCP's Soil and Water Resource Management (SWRM) program, which assists in implementing infrastructure projects, such as manure storage facilities and streambank restoration to reduce water pollution.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$426,000 proposal for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) monitoring and fees, and his proposal to increase CAFO permitting fees to \$545. This will provide support for overseeing the permitting, inspection, and enforcement of CAFOs across Wisconsin, which create millions of gallons of concentrated liquid manure per day that can seep into our drinking water if managed improperly.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$5,000,000 proposal to fund and expand eligibility for the DNR's Well Compensation Grant Program. This will ensure that more private well owners can access the resources they need to protect their drinking water from nitrate and other contaminants.

### **Clean energy and climate change**

Human-driven climate change is a scientific fact, and Wisconsin is already feeling its impact. Reduced corn harvests, unprecedented flooding, shifting snowmelt patterns that disrupt wildlife, toxic algae blooms in our lakes, declining water quality in the Great Lakes, even surging mosquito populations are just some of the growing threats. The

burden of climate pollution falls disproportionately on communities of color, worsening existing health and environmental injustices. Wisconsin must assess the health impacts of our current energy use and ensure that future policies and investments protect all communities, leaving no one behind.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal for \$10.1 million for the Community Climate Action grant program at the Department of Administration to support municipal and Tribal governments in developing climate risk assessments and action plans across the state to advance the State's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal for \$1.3 million for the Community Climate Engagement grant program to encourage community participation in climate action planning.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal to reintroduce Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) at the Public Service Commission will enable Wisconsin to take a comprehensive approach to meeting our energy needs. This plan will not only assess the costs of new energy investments but also consider their impact on public health and the workforce, ensuring that future energy decisions are sustainable and equitable for all.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal to move transit funding back into the transportation fund and increase local transit aids as proposed in the Governor's budget, including funding for paratransit, specialized transportation, tribal transportation, and local grant programs for transit, walking and biking. Allow regional transit authorities to exist anywhere in the state.

### **Promoting clean energy**

Climate change represents the greatest threat to human life on Earth, but the solution – clean energy – offers tremendous opportunities for job creation and economic growth. Recent extreme weather events, including severe flooding from historic rainstorms in Wisconsin, have underscored the urgent need for bold action to address this crisis. The time to invest in clean energy and safeguard our future is now.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal for \$50 million in funding for a Green Bank to drive clean energy in Wisconsin by allowing Wisconsin businesses, local governments, and nonprofits to fund renewable energy projects. This \$50 million sustainable funding effort ensures that Wisconsin can continue to transition our energy to cleaner and more affordable energy options.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal for \$1.5 million for Intervenor Compensation (IC) to support more impacted community representation at the PSC. This comes at a time when there has been a significant increase in rate cases, and new natural gas, renewable, and transmission construction cases. The IC fund has not been increased in over a decade.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal to double the Focus on Energy program to 2.4 percent of utilities' annual operating revenue to support energy efficiency and conservation efforts. These programs help save ratepayers money and reduce energy use.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal for \$2 million for Tribal communities to reduce energy burdens by supporting home repairs. These programs help save ratepayers money and reduce negative health impacts.

## Lands

Wisconsin's lands are home to around 700 species of native vertebrates and 1,800 species of native plants. These lands support time-honored traditions like hiking, camping, biking, paddling, fishing, and hunting, forming the foundation of our outdoor recreation economy. This sector supports 96,867 jobs and contributes \$11.2 billion to our state's economy. Beyond recreation, healthy lands are essential for growing the food we eat, safeguarding the water we drink, and cleaning the air we breathe. Protecting these resources is vital for both our environment and economy.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' proposal to reauthorize the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program at \$100 million per year through fiscal year 2036. Since its creation in 1989, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program has played a critical role in protecting Wisconsin's environment. Today, 650,000 acres are protected by the Stewardship Program and 99 percent of Wisconsinites live within just five miles of a project supported by it.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$15,638,600 proposal for DNR to support capital improvement projects for our state parks and trails. Wisconsin's State Parks and Trails continue to see record-level visits. Unfortunately, years of underinvestment have left us 49th in the nation for per capita spending – leaving park stations, restrooms, water infrastructure, boat launches, roads, and favorite lookouts in serious disrepair.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$34,000,000 for DATCP's Food Security Grant Program. This program would provide grants to nonprofit food assistance agencies to purchase Wisconsin-made or grown agricultural products and help combat food insecurity. It would also support Native food producers in helping nonprofit food assistance agencies purchase and distribute culturally-relevant food to Tribal elders.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$7,628,200 proposal for the DNR's Revitalize Wisconsin Initiative, which would provide grants or direct services to help address environmental pollution that has accumulated at abandoned properties.

▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$2,000,000 proposal for DMA pre-disaster flood resilience grants, which help local governments assess flood risks and implement flood resilience projects.

- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$1,000,000 proposal for DATCP's Transition to Grass program, which would help protect our water and build healthy soil by supporting agricultural producers in implementing grass-based managed grazing systems.
- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$508,000 proposal to continue support for Tourism's Office of Outdoor Recreation, which supports Wisconsin's \$11.2 billion outdoor recreation economy.
- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$400,000 proposal for DNR to support Manoomin restoration and public education efforts in ceded territory waters.

### Healthy and safe homes and communities

Every Wisconsinite deserves to live in a home free from food insecurity and environmental hazards. Food insecurity impacts children's mental and physical health, and their performance in school. Whether we're talking about contaminants like lead, mold, radon, smoke, asbestos, or others, we know that many indoor pollutants can lead to serious health impacts. We also know that toxic substances such as opioids and other drugs can poison our bodies and undermine strong communities. We must support programs and policies that protect every Wisconsinite against these impacts.

- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$147,720,000 proposal for DPI to make school breakfast and lunch available to all Wisconsin K-12 students at no charge.
- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$100,388,500 proposal for DHS to restart the Windows Plus Program, which would support lead-safe renovation in schools, homes and child care centers.
- ▶ **Support** \$1 million in Community-Based Withdrawal Management Centers to support people in our communities who are seeking treatment for substance use disorder.
- ▶ **Support** Governor Evers' \$894,400 proposal to support the DOJ in representing DNR in the enforcement and defense of laws that protect our air, land, and water.

### Healthy democracy

The long-term health of Wisconsin is inextricably linked with the health of our democracy. A free, fair, and equitable political process is essential to ensuring elected officials reflect the values of their constituents and advance protections that are critical to our health, our environment, and future generations.

- ▶ **Support** Gov. Evers' \$709,900 proposal for WEC and the DOT to implement automatic voter registration. This will help Wisconsinites more easily navigate voter registration requirements, which can be particularly confusing for students who move frequently, and can create barriers for tribal members who often receive mail at their PO boxes.

▶ **Support** introduction of the popular initiative and referendum process. This process would allow voters to bring important issues directly to the ballot. This keeps democracy vibrant and responsive to the needs of people.

▶ **SUPPORT** Gov. Evers' proposal to update Wisconsin's voter ID law so that it is less restrictive for eligible university students, and so that every school in the UW System and the Wisconsin Technical College System is required to issue ID cards compliant with Wisconsin's voter ID law.

▶ **SUPPORT** Gov. Evers' proposal to shorten the 28 day voter registration residency requirement. This change would allow Wisconsinites to register to vote at their address, as long as they have lived at that address for 10 consecutive days prior to an election.

▶ **SUPPORT** Gov. Evers' proposal to restore prior law that required public high schools to provide voter registration opportunities.

▶ **SUPPORT** Gov. Evers' proposal to expand in-person early voting opportunities by eliminating Wisconsin's current restriction, which limits in-person early voting to no earlier than 14 days before an election.

▶ **SUPPORT** Gov. Evers' proposal to support local elections administration by allowing a county or municipal clerk to begin processing absentee ballots on the day before an election.

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