



2023-2024 Budget Recommendations

The state budget and legislative agenda should reflect the strong conservation and democratic values of the people of Wisconsin.

Increasing Collaboration Among Local, State, and Tribal Governments

The state of Wisconsin works with local and tribal governments to create a better quality of life for the people who live here by implementing joining funding programs, sharing information, and collaborating where beneficial to do so.

► **Support** Governor Evers' \$959,700 proposal to create a 5-person local government grant resources team at the Department of Administration. This will ensure that local communities can maximize their opportunities to apply for federal grants that address their safe drinking water and clean energy needs.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget

► **Support** Governor Evers' \$752,000 proposal to establish "Wisconsin For All" Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives that promote and advance equity across state government and state programs. This would establish a cabinet-level Chief Equity Officer at the Department of Administration and equity officers at 18 state agencies to identify opportunities to advance equity in government operations.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

► **Support** Governor Evers' \$356,700 proposal to create a Director of Native American Affairs to manage relations between the state and Native American tribes and coordinate with other state agency tribal liaisons.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

Water

Too many Wisconsinites can't turn on their taps and drink their water. With aging infrastructure and growing pollution problems, the number of Wisconsin families who don't have access to clean, safe drinking water in their own homes is reaching crisis levels. Whether it's threats from emerging pollution like PFAS, lead poisoning impacting children's brain development, or manure forcing families to dig expensive new wells, Wisconsin is seeing increasing impacts of unsafe water.

At the same time, over the past four years, Wisconsin has made tremendous progress understanding statewide water contamination. Matched with incoming resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, the

next four years present a historic opportunity to tackle these challenges. In service of all these goals:

Protecting Our Drinking Water from PFAS

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control have advised doctors that PFAS have been linked to increased rates of testicular and kidney cancer, higher cholesterol levels, liver damage, decreases in infant birth weights, and increased risk of high blood pressure in pregnant women. Wisconsinites across the state are facing burdensome costs associated with addressing PFAS contamination. For example, a new system to treat PFAS contamination in Wausau will cost residents \$17 million. As other communities continue to test for and find PFAS contamination, they will also need access to substantial funding and technical assistance for remediation.

- ▶ **Support** Governor Evers' \$100 million proposal for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to administer a PFAS municipal grant program, which would provide support to local units of government impacted by PFAS contamination.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC allocated \$125 million into a PFAS trust fund, but legislators will need to pass a separate bill that creates a process for distributing the funds.

- ▶ **Support** Governor Evers' \$3,873,600 proposal for the DNR to implement the PFAS Action plan. This includes 11 new positions at DNR and statewide testing, monitoring, and standard setting.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC did not fund this proposal.

- ▶ **Support** Governor Evers' \$1 million proposal for the DNR to help communities collect, dispose, and replace PFAS-containing firefighting foam.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC did not fund this proposal.

- ▶ **Support** Governor Evers' \$900,000 proposal for the DNR to assist with PFAS emergency response, which includes providing temporary bottled water to impacted communities.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC did not fund this proposal.

- ▶ **Support** Governor Evers' \$200,000 proposal for the Department of Health Services (DHS) to provide PFAS awareness and educational outreach.

Lowering Lead Levels

Lead poisoning, especially in young children, can lead to profound and permanent health problems, including damage to brain development. Young children in childcare centers – and even in their own homes – can be exposed to lead-contaminated water without their parents' knowledge. While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a starting point for addressing contamination, Wisconsin could still be short \$1.4 - \$1.9 billion for replacing all lead service lines (LSLs) and addressing lead poisoning more broadly.

► **Support** Governor Evers' \$200 million proposal for the Environmental Improvement Program to replace lead service lines across the state. Support additional efforts to ensure that we can replace all LSLs by 2033. This should include opportunities for communities to receive more funds as principal forgiveness.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

► **Support** Governor Evers' \$100 million proposal for the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority to provide low-interest and forgivable loans to low- to moderate-income households to renovate or repair their current home, including lead remediation.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC funded \$50 million for this program.

► **Support** Governor Evers' \$17,134,000 proposal for lead poisoning prevention and response through DHS. This funding will support local health departments, increase lead investigations, and increase Medicaid lead investigation reimbursement rates.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

► **Support** Governor Evers' \$9,259,600 proposal for DHS to expand eligibility for the Birth to 3 Program to support children with a blood lead level greater than 3.5 micrograms per deciliter.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

► **Support** Governor Evers' proposal to modify current law so that utilities can provide 100% grant funding to support the replacement of lead service lines for property owners.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

► **Support** Governor Evers' proposal to lower the definition of lead poisoning or lead exposure to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter and require a lead investigation for every lead-poisoned child under 6.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

Providing Permanent Support to Private Well Owners

Roughly 1.7 million people in Wisconsin depend on private wells to get their drinking water. It's estimated that 47 percent of these wells are contaminated by one or more pollutants at levels above public health standards. Pollutants of particular concern include Nitrate, PFAS, and arsenic. Because of these contaminants, entire communities are at risk for short-term and long-term consequences ranging from diarrhea to developmental challenges to certain cancers, and death.

► **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal to update the DNR' Well Compensation Grant Program, including an additional \$1 million in funding and less restrictive eligibility requirements. This will ensure that more private well owners can access the resources they need to protect their drinking water.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC funded the Well Compensation Grant Program, but did not expand eligibility.

Implement Non-Point Pollution Programs to Protect Against Polluted Runoff

County soil and water conservation departments provide essential testing and monitoring services across Wisconsin. These departments assist farmers with designing and constructing manure storage facilities, help establish conservation cropping practices, and aid in nutrient management planning. The county departments also help landowners find cost-share funds for conservation work. These services result in management practices that reduce nonpoint pollution runoff.

► **SUPPORT** \$18.7 million in annual base funding for county conservationists.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC cut \$383,500 in funding for this program.

► **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal for \$10 million in bonding to support county projects developed under the DNR's Targeted Runoff Management program (TRM), which provides assistance to communities for infrastructure projects that reduce nonpoint source pollution.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC funded \$6.5 million for this program.

► **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal for \$7 million in bonding for the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection's (DATCP's) Soil and Water Resource Management (SWRM) program, which assists farmers in implementing infrastructure projects such as manure storage facilities and streambank restoration to reduce water pollution.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC funded \$7 million for this program.

Funding Oversight of CAFOs

Families are suffering in Wisconsin. As Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) proliferate across the state – and grow ever larger – they create millions of gallons of concentrated liquid manure per day. That manure is spread over pastures and fields where it seeps into the groundwater and our drinking water. The DNR needs adequate staffing and adequate funding to allow it to implement oversight properly. In recent years, the number of CAFOs in Wisconsin have increased over 500 percent without additional support.

► **Support** Governor Evers' proposal to increase DNR permit fees for CAFOs from \$345 to \$545 each year.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

Clean Up Contaminated Sediments

The Great Lakes is the largest system of freshwater lakes in the world, and represents 95 percent of all the freshwater in the United States. Unfortunately, due to heavy industrial activities in the last century, there are many areas along the Great Lakes, including in Wisconsin, that have excessive levels of toxins accumulated in the water and soil near old industrial sites.

► ***SUPPORT*** Governor Evers' budget request to authorize \$15 million in bonding for contaminated sediment removal from Great Lakes sites and their tributaries that are on Wisconsin's impaired water list.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC funded \$7.5 million.

Clean Energy and Climate Change

Addressing Wisconsin's Role in Climate Change

Human-driven climate change is scientific fact and Wisconsin is already suffering because of it. Reduced corn harvests, unprecedented flooding, later snowmelts that are disrupting wildlife migration, toxic algae blooms in our lakes, degradation of water quality in the Great Lakes, even increased mosquito hatches – climate change is already having serious detrimental effects in Wisconsin.

► ***SUPPORT*** Governor Evers' proposal to fund the Office of Environmental Justice, including the director, the chief resilience officer and another position. In addition, support \$4 million to fund the clean energy grant program and funding for climate risk assessments for local governments. The impacts of climate change pollution fall unfairly on communities of color. Wisconsin should assess the health impacts of our current energy use for all our communities and ensure future policies and investments do not leave any community behind.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

► ***SUPPORT*** Governor Evers' proposal to increase local transit aids by 4% for 2023-2025 budget and allow regional transit authorities to exist anywhere in the state. Wisconsin should continue to invest even more in transit options rather than expanding highways in already polluted communities, such as the proposed I-94 expansion in Milwaukee or the Beltline in Madison.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC provided funding for a 2% increase in transit aids.

Promoting Clean Energy

While climate change poses the greatest threat to human life on the planet, the alternative – clean energy – offers huge opportunities for jobs and economic growth. Recent extreme weather events around the country, including severe flooding due to historic rain events in Wisconsin, have captured people's attention to the need to make bold now.

► ***SUPPORT*** Governor Evers' proposal for \$10 million for expanding clean energy job training and reemployment opportunities for folks joining our clean energy workforce. This will help ensure that Wisconsin is able to meet our climate goals while ensuring that we have a workforce that can provide for their families into the future.

► **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

► ***SUPPORT*** Governor Evers' proposal to require the PSC to establish the social cost of carbon and to consider using the social cost of carbon when evaluating new construction. The social costs of carbon are efforts to estimate the negative

economic impact of continuing to burn fossil fuels on public health, our communities, and our economy.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

▶ ***SUPPORT*** the Governor's proposal to double the Focus on Energy program to 2.4% of utilities' annual operating revenue. We also support efforts to give the PSC the authority, and potentially additional resources they might need to allow them to move the IRA grant funds quickly to Wisconsin residents and businesses.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

Lands

Wisconsin lands are home to approximately 700 species of native vertebrates and 1,800 species of native plants. We turn to our lands for time-honored traditions of hiking, biking, paddling, fishing, and hunting. We also rely on our lands to grow the food we eat, protect the water we drink, and clean the air we breathe.

Funding Our State Parks and Trails

Wisconsin's State Parks and Trails continue to see record-level visits – serving as a refuge for native species, and a cornerstone of our outdoor recreation economy which employs approximately 93,000 people and contributes 7.8 billion dollars to our gross domestic product. 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*** Governor Evers' \$21,805,200 proposal for capital improvement projects in the state park system.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC funded \$16.5 million.

▶ ***SUPPORT*** Governor Evers' \$1.1 million proposal to make the Department of Tourism's Office of Outdoor Recreation a permanent resource for Wisconsin visitors, manufacturers, and communities who support and benefit from our outdoor recreation economy.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC provided \$527,200 in one-time funding.

Incentivizing Locally Sourced Foods

Locally sourced food provides increased nutrition, supports local economies, helps protect the environment, and contributes to a more sustainable food supply. We must invest in programs that incentivize growing our locally sourced food, which help support our local farmers while providing critical nutrition to people in our communities that are experiencing hunger.

▶ ***SUPPORT*** Governor Evers' \$15 million proposal to increase total funding for DATCP's Food Security Initiative grant program. This program provides grants to nonprofit food assistance agencies to help combat food insecurity and purchase Wisconsin made or grown agricultural products.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC did not fund this proposal.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' \$4 million proposal for a DATCP-led Tribal Food Box program to support producers and sustainable food access in Tribal Nations.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC provided \$3 million in one-time funding.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' \$2.75 million proposal for the Department of Public Instruction to support locally sourced school lunches.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' \$400,000 proposal for DNR to support manoomin (wild rice) restoration and public education in ceded territory waters.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' \$1,470,000 proposal for DHS to expand access to farmer's markets for Wisconsinites in the FoodShare program.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

Healthy Democracy

Currently, Wisconsin has one of the nation's most stringent – and complex – voter ID laws coupled with the most partisan gerrymandered maps in the nation. These two elements have worked to keep good legislation supported by the majority of Wisconsin residents from being enacted, such as protecting our drinking water and building an equitable, clean energy economy. Wisconsin's voter registration requirements can be confusing for students who move frequently, and can create barriers for Tribal members who often receive mail at their PO Boxes. Inaccessible information, confusing requirements, and limited access to Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) service centers disproportionately impact voters of color, transgender voters, voters with disabilities, low-income voters, voters who do not speak English as their first language, and voters impacted by the criminal legal system.

Making it Easier to Register and Vote

To fully address the issues above, we must expand the list of photo IDs with which Wisconsinites can vote, end felony disenfranchisement, and implement a system that ensures a fair process for establishing legislative and congressional maps. In the meantime:

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal for \$521,700 for the Wisconsin Elections Commission and the Department of Transportation to implement automatic voter registration.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' \$2,400,000 proposal to expand hours of operation at the Division of Motor Vehicles. This will help more Wisconsinites access a photo ID they need to vote.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

▶ **SUPPORT** Governor 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.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

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

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

▶ **SUPPORT** Governor 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.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

▶ **SUPPORT** Governor 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.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

▶ **SUPPORT** Governor 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.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

Supporting Workers

Workers deserve to be safe, respected, and fairly compensated for their labor. Our workers are the bedrock of our economy and our ability to provide healthy and safe communities, develop clean and innovative technology and grow our food.

▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal to repeal the provisions of 2017 Wisconsin Act 3, which prohibited agreements such as collective bargaining agreements, project labor agreements or community workforce agreements between governments and labor organizations on public works projects, as well as repealing the prohibition on contracts between labor unions and employers that specify the employer may only hire unionized workers.

▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal to repeal prohibitions on local governments from adopting family and medical leave requirements, work hours, and required workplace benefits.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal to require state and local public work projects to pay workers the prevailing wage and benefits to workers in the project area.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal to raise the minimum wage from the current \$ to \$10.25 an hour by January 1, 2026 plus indexing to the consumer price index thereafter. The proposal would also create a study committee to explore raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

- ▶ **SUPPORT** Governor Evers' proposal to implement Driver Licenses for All, regardless of documentation status, so that workers can drive to their places of employment.
 - ▶ **Joint Finance Committee Action:** JFC removed this item from the budget.

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For more information, please contact Jennifer Giegerich, Government Affairs Director, at 608-213-1406 or jennifer@conservationvoters.org, or Peter Burress, Government Affairs Manager, at 920-421-3601 or peter@conservationvoters.org.