

Agenda Item Report



Winnebago County
The Wave of the Future

DATE: March 16, 2023

FROM: Chad Casper, Director of Land & Water Conservation

RE: Resolution: Urge the Wisconsin Legislature to Provide \$18.7 million in Stable, Core Funding Support for County Conservation Department Staffing

General Description:

Asking the Wisconsin Legislature and the Joint Committee on Finance to provide \$18.7 million in stable, base funding for county conservation staffing, in fulfillment of the state's core funding goal. Providing state funding for core county LWCD staffing needs will result in more conservation on the landscape and better protection of water quality

Action Requested:

To approve the Resolution: Urge the Wisconsin Legislature to Provide \$18.7 million in Stable, Core Funding Support for County Conservation Department Staffing

Procedural Steps:

Committee of Jurisdiction: Land Conservation Committee Action taken:	Meeting date: 4/6/23 Vote:
Legislative Committee Action Taken	Meeting Date: 3/27/23 Vote:
County Board Action Taken	Meeting date: 4/18/23 Vote:

Background:

Wis. Stats. 92.06 and 92.07 create and define the powers of Land Conservation Committees (LCCs) and Wis. Stat. 92.09 empowers Land and Water Conservation Departments (LWCDs) to administer county soil and water conservation programs and may exercise the powers granted to the land conservation committee. County LWCDs are the local delivery mechanism for a wide range of Wisconsin's natural soil and water and other resource management programs including non-point pollution control, farmland preservation, lakes protection, and more.

Policy Discussion:

The State of Wisconsin 2023 Joint Allocation Plan establishes the current need for county LWCD staffing at \$18.7 million, per the core funding goal established in Wis. Stat. 92.14(6)(b). The support of county LWCD funding is a bipartisan issue, supported by farm, conservation, environmental and local government groups alike, and was a top priority voiced by Wisconsinites at statewide Water Quality Task Force hearings in 2019. Looking for Winnebago County to support and urge the Wisconsin Legislature and the Joint Committee on Finance to provide \$18.7 million in stable, base funding for

county conservation staffing, in fulfillment of the state's core funding goal and in recognition that county LWCD professionals are the among the best and most cost-effective solutions we have to improving water quality, achieving clean and safe drinking water, and supporting a viable agricultural industry at the same time.

Attachments:

Resolution: Urge the Wisconsin Legislature to Provide \$18.7 million in Stable, Core Funding Support for County Conservation Department Staffing