

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

TO THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

WHEREAS, 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; and;

WHEREAS, 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; and;

WHEREAS, LWCD professionals work as trusted, technical advisors to support agricultural producers, assist waterfront property owners, help farmers develop and implement nutrient management plans, respond to natural disasters like floods, and spend years building the trust to be able to successfully do so; and;

WHEREAS, the conservation practices that LWCD professionals help landowners with have numerous water quality benefits, including: preventing soil erosion and promoting soil health, increasing infiltration into groundwater aquifers, protecting drinking water supply, reducing surface runoff and flood severity, and more; and;

WHEREAS, 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); and

WHEREAS, the return on investment in county LWCDs is high—leveraging other grant dollars into more conservation on the land and more dollars into local economies, and multiplying several times over the state’s existing investment; and;

WHEREAS, 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; and;

WHEREAS, providing state funding for core county LWCD staffing needs will result in more conservation on the landscape and better protection of water quality.; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors hereby supports and urges 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 available to improve water quality, achieve clean and safe drinking water, and support a viable agricultural industry simultaneously.

BE FURTHER IT RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded by the County Clerk to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, the members of the Joint Committee on Finance, and the state senators and state representatives representing Winnebago County.

Fiscal Note:

Respectfully submitted by:

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Committee Vote: _____

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Respectfully submitted by:

LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Committee Vote: _____

Vote Required for Passage: **Three-Fourths of Those Members Present**

Approved by the Winnebago County Executive this ____ day of _____, 2023.

Jonathan D. Doemel
Winnebago County Executive

DRAFT