



Senate Republicans Fail to Fix Polluter Loophole in PFAS Clean-Up Bill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2023

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MADISON, WI—The Wisconsin State Senate missed the mark by a wide margin today when it passed SB 312 over the objections of the very Wisconsinites it purports to help—those whose communities have been directly impacted by PFAS contamination.

The bill, which creates a municipal grant program and an “innocent landowner” grant program, allows certain corporate polluters to qualify for “innocent landowner” grant funds, a provision that will force private residential well owners to compete for funds with comparatively sophisticated and well-resourced entities like paper mills and solid waste facilities.

To make matters worse, the bill ties eligibility for the so-called “innocent landowner” grant program to limitations on the DNR’s authority to hold PFAS polluters accountable under Wisconsin’s Spills Law. When the bill was first introduced, members of impacted communities across the state advocated for revisions that would remove those limitations. Not only does the final version of the bill fail to fix the polluter loophole, it makes it even easier for polluters to qualify for a free pass.

“Legislation that provides aid to municipalities and private well owners burdened by PFAS contamination is badly needed,” said MEA Staff Attorney Rob Lee. “Unfortunately, SB 312 comes with too many strings attached and doesn’t do enough to prioritize private well owners. \$125 million may seem like a lot of money, but it is only a fraction of what will ultimately be needed. DNR’s ability to protect public health through environmental clean-up laws is priceless, especially when considering that these contaminants are still being pumped into the environment.”

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Midwest Environmental Advocates is a nonprofit law center that combines the power of law with the resolve of communities facing environmental injustice to secure and protect the rights of all people to healthy water, land, and air. Learn more at midwestadvocates.org.