



## Assembly Action on Clean Water Legislation Falls Short of What Wisconsin Families Deserve

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**Madison, WI**—Today, the Wisconsin State Assembly is set to act on a set of proposals that were put forth by the Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality. Calling the package of legislation inadequate, Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) urges lawmakers not to end the legislative session without acting to respond to Wisconsin families whose health depends on improved drinking water quality.

“Some of the bills being considered today are modest steps in the right direction. Others would give polluters more opportunity to obstruct clean-up efforts,” said Tony Wilkin Gibart, executive director of Midwest Environmental Advocates. “Overall, the legislature has so far failed to adequately respond to Wisconsinites dealing with contaminated drinking water.”

In 2019, the Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality held hearings around the state. [Three of the top priorities](#) raised by the public at the hearings include cleaning up existing PFAS contamination, replacing lead lateral pipes and developing sensible regulations to protect rural communities from manure runoff from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). The package of legislation currently before lawmakers does not respond to these priorities.

“The legislature is still not acting on urgent water quality priorities that affect public health in Wisconsin,” said Wilkin Gibart. “Passage of these bills will not do enough to address the ongoing public health crises related to drinking water in our state. The bills will not reduce existing PFAS contamination. They will not speed up the replacement of lead lateral pipes, and they will not bring relief to Wisconsinites whose water is polluted by manure from CAFOs.”

### ***Bi-partisan PFAS bill not on today’s agenda***

“The PFAS-related bill being voted on today ([AB 792](#)) would only reduce future contamination from firefighting foams. That’s a well-intentioned bill but not one that helps families in Marinette, Rhinelander, Madison and elsewhere who are concerned about their water,” said Wilkin Gibart. “The bipartisan PFAS legislation from Representative Nygren and Senator Hansen ([ABs 842 & 843](#)/[SBs 772 & 773](#)) would take significant steps to begin cleaning up current PFAS contamination, and we urge quick passage.”

### ***Legislative committees fast track bill that makes future CAFO protections less likely***

MEA also voiced concern that, as the legislature was focused on bills related to water quality, senate and

assembly committees voted to fast track another bill ([AB 894/SB 808](#)) that would make it more difficult to protect rural communities from CAFO pollution.

“At a time when the headlines are filled with news about attempts to improve water quality, it is unconscionable that certain members of the legislature are simultaneously working to fast-track a bill that will take us in the opposite direction. Wilkin Gibart said. “CAFOs have made the water in parts of Wisconsin undrinkable. [A leading public health organization has called for a CAFO moratorium](#). Rather than address this issue, the legislature is rushing to push through a bill to make it more difficult for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to bring livestock siting laws in line with updated science.”

Wilkin Gibart concluded, “This cannot be the last word from our legislators on water quality. Wisconsin families deserve comprehensive solutions that preserve their health and our drinking water for the long-term.”

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