



## **Governor Evers' Budget Prioritizes a Healthy and Just Future for All Wisconsinites**

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**Contact:** Peg Sheaffer, MEA Communications Director  
(608) 251-5047 x 3, [psheaffer@midwestadvocates.org](mailto:psheaffer@midwestadvocates.org)

**Madison, WI**— The budget Governor Evers released last night serves as a roadmap for confronting the most pressing environmental issues facing the state, and it does so with attention to equity and environmental justice. The choices we make over the coming years will determine whether future Wisconsinites will have access to clean water and the opportunity to thrive in a livable climate. This budget truly recognizes what is at stake.

### **Environmental Justice**

Last night in his address, the Governor said, “We cannot ignore the role environmental justice plays in building a state where every family in every zip code can be successful.” He correctly noted that, “every Wisconsinite--whether they live in the Driftless, the Central Sands, or the Northwoods, or in the heart of our urban areas--has experienced the effects of climate change,” and he highlighted the fact that communities of color, low-income people and other vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected.

To further the state’s commitment to environmental justice, the Governor’s budget calls for the creation of an Office of Environmental Justice, which would promote policies that address the unequal environmental burdens placed on marginalized communities.

### **Climate Resilience**

This budget builds on the work of the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change by prioritizing climate resilience.

“The budget lays out strategies to meet the state’s greenhouse gas reduction goals, while giving Wisconsin communities resources to build resiliency to meet the challenges of flooding and other climate disruptions that are already happening,” said Tony Wilkin Gibart, Executive Director of Midwest Environmental Advocates.

### **PFAS**

The Governor’s budget responds to the significant threat PFAS contamination poses to the health of Wisconsinites. The Governor is calling for rapidly expanding testing for these highly toxic so-called “forever chemicals,” developing public health standards, and providing resources for communities, like those in La

Crosse, Marinette, and Rhinelander, that are confronting contamination in drinking water and within the environment.

### **Lead Contamination**

This budget dedicates resources to replace lead lateral water pipes. Lead is unsafe in any amount, and no parent should have to worry that the water coming out of their tap could be poisoning their children.

“Last session, Republicans in the legislature played politics with the health of Wisconsin children and rejected this funding because they thought too much of it would go to help families in Milwaukee,” said Wilkin Gibart. “Lead contamination affects children throughout our state, and families should have access to clean water no matter where they live.”

### **Nitrate Pollution and Well Compensation**

Governor Evers has also prioritized clean drinking water for rural Wisconsinites who get their water from private wells. The budget calls for large concentrated animal feeding operations to pay their fair share of oversight and monitoring costs.

“Many of these massive operations have an environmental impact equivalent to entire cities’ wastewater treatment plants, yet they currently pay permit fees of only \$345, which is comparable to what a typical family pays in annual DMV fees,” Wilkin Gibart said.

Additionally, the budget makes financial assistance more readily available to families whose wells have been contaminated by nitrates and adds resources to a pilot program to prevent these contaminants from seeping into aquifers.

### **A Clean Environment and a Healthy Future for All Wisconsinites**

“A budget is about values,” said Wilkin Gibart. “The priorities in this budget show that Governor Evers shares the value Wisconsinites -- no matter their income or zip code -- place on securing a healthy environment for their communities. Now more than ever, a healthy future depends on all of us making our voices heard as the budget process continues.”

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