

WISPIRG

Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group
1050 Regent St., Suite L2
Madison, WI 53715

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jennifer Giegerich (608) 251-1918

Wisconsin Has Opportunity with Cranberry Nuisance Suit WISPIRG Calls on the Legislature to Strengthen Clean Water Rules

Wisconsin has a cherished legacy of life lived on our rivers, lakes, and streams. The state of Wisconsin has an obligation to protect the health and safety of our waters for all citizens. That is why WISPIRG appreciated Senator Kedzie's leadership in calling for hearings after the Milwaukee Municipal sewage spill to address the root causes of that massive spill into Lake Michigan and explore solutions on how to address that problem.

Likewise, WISPIRG encourages the Wisconsin Legislature to protect Wisconsin's waters from potential discharges of fertilizers and pesticides from cranberry growing operations. This issue that has been brought to the forefront in recent weeks after Attorney General Lautenschlager brought suit on behalf of area homeowners against a cranberry operation that had discharged fertilizer-laden wastewater into Musky Bay of Lac Courte Oreilles Lake in Sawyer County, allegedly resulting in thick mats of algae that interfere with the public's right to use the Bay for fishing and swimming. Although state law could be interpreted to require cranberry growing operations to limit their fertilizer and pesticide discharges, the Wisconsin DNR has not taken clear regulatory action to prevent this significant source of pollution.

Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's lawsuit against the cranberry grower in Sawyer County highlights the fact that our state laws need to be clarified to stop the pollution from cranberry growing operations. Until that time, however, WISPIRG supports Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's efforts to address the lake's water quality problems and finally get it cleaned up.

And just as Lautenschlager clears up the water, we expect the legislature to clarify the law to prevent pesticide and fertilizer discharges from cranberry operations that pollute our public waters.

No one should get special treatment in Wisconsin. Our elected officials should be taking action against those who pollute our lakes, rivers, and groundwater, and we should be glad when they do so.