



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Earth Day: The Wisconsin Way

Assembly Republicans unveil environmental protection package

MADISON – Building on Wisconsin’s deep-rooted commitment to protecting the environment, on this Earth Day, Wisconsin Assembly Republicans unveiled a package of market-based legislative proposals aimed at promoting clean air, water and land. This package is in addition to the Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality, announced in January. First launched in 1970, Earth Day was founded by Wisconsin’s U.S Democratic Senator Gaylord Nelson, and co-chaired by former Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey of California.

“On this Earth Day, we join others across the country and around the world in recognizing the importance of protecting our environment,” said Rep. Adam Neylon (R-Pewaukee). “We are committed to protecting our hunting and fishing heritage by supporting our state parks and public lands.”

“Job creators choose Wisconsin for our positive business climate, our dedicated workforce and our clean air, land and water,” said Rep. Warren Petryk (R-Eleva). “We are committed to building a better Wisconsin, and protecting our environment for future generations.”

The package includes:

Clean Energy Corridor Grants - This legislative proposal helps create the opportunity for drivers of electric vehicles to travel on main highways connecting neighboring states. The bill authorizes the Public Service Commission to use funds from the Volkswagen settlement to provide matching grants to businesses, such as convenience stores, restaurants and gas stations, along major thoroughfares for the purchase and installation of electric vehicle charging stations. This will help benefit the tourism industry, bring Wisconsin on par with other states and promote the use of electric vehicles.

“Responsible conservation requires public and private partnerships that result in greater opportunities for environmental protection,” said Rep. Scott Krug (R-Nekoosa).

Renewable Energy Rebates - This legislative proposal requires all energy providers, such as utilities, to offer residential customers the option of purchasing renewable energy for their residence at a premium. To help mitigate the cost of the premium, the Public Service Commission will develop a rebate program to cover up to 50 percent of the premium customers pay for the renewable energy.

Solar and Wind Education & Training Grants - This legislative proposal promotes workforce development and technical careers in the fast-growing field of renewable energy, by providing reimbursement grants to employers for solar and wind energy systems education and training. The Department of Workforce Development will distribute the grants using existing Fast Forward funds.

“According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, solar installers and wind turbine technicians are currently the fastest growing professions across the country, Wisconsin cannot afford to miss out on this opportunity for job creation,” stated Representative Mike Kuglitsch (R-New Berlin).

Commitment to Wisconsin Stewardship - In the budget, we will reaffirm Wisconsin’s commitment to protecting the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program, which preserves valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protects water quality and fisheries, and expands opportunities for outdoor recreation across Wisconsin on state owned land.

“As a 4th generation dairy farmer I know the value of protecting our land and environment. It is my job as a state representative to protect, and extend the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program. I want to work to preserve this program so future generations can enjoy Wisconsin,” Rep. Loren Oldenburg (R-Viroqua).

“As a farm animal veterinarian for more than 30 years, I know the value of protecting our land and environment. It is essential that we extend the important Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program. I want this program to continue so future generations can enjoy everything Wisconsin has to offer,” said Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay).

Recycling Electronics Initiative - We are calling for the exploration of innovative solutions to address the issue of the disposal of electronics, and the resultant pollutants, which end up in landfills. This initiative supports efforts to increase and incentivize the recycling of electronics to promote clean land and water.

“This environmental package is a reflection of our belief that you can protect our water resources and air quality, provide wildlife habitat, promote tourism and outdoor recreation, while also supporting jobs and the economy,” said Rep. Jeff Mursau (R-Crivitz).

Assembly Republicans plan to circulate the legislative proposals within the coming days.

Speaker Vos announced the creation of the Water Quality Task Force in early January. The task force working on this statewide, collaborative effort will make recommendations on assessing and improving the quality of surface and groundwater throughout the state.

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