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Gov. Walker's Response to Keweenaw County Water Contamination is Insufficient

MADISON -- Governor Walker recently announced he will seek private investment in manure digesters to address the growing drinking water problem in Keweenaw County. This is a woefully insufficient "solution" to a public health crisis.

In Keweenaw County delicate geology known as karst is being inundated with manure. Solid and liquid manure spread as fertilizer by farms and waste disposal contractors in karst areas -- where there are cracks, faults, and holes in the bedrock -- is poisoning local wells. It's turning water at the tap brown and forcing citizens to haul safe water for drinking and washing from a local school.

Walker should instead direct the Department of Natural Resources Board to adopt a strong NR 151 rule to limit when and where manure can be spread on land in karst areas. Walker should also include adequate DNR staff in his state budget to ensure all farms are in compliance with their Clean Water permits.

"As Wisconsin taxpayers, we expect safe, clean drinking water," said Kerry Schumann, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters executive director. "And yet, liquid manure is literally pouring out of some families' faucets when it rains. Gov. Walker, the legislature, and the DNR need to make solving this public health crisis a priority."

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Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to electing conservation leaders, holding decision makers accountable, and encouraging lawmakers to champion conservation policies that effectively protect Wisconsin's public health and natural resources.