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# Rep. Kitchens introduces water quality bills

MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) was pleased to join a bipartisan group of lawmakers today in supporting a package of legislative recommendations that was released by the Speaker's Task Force on Water Quality.

Shortly after the task force's press conference at the state Capitol, Rep. Kitchens introduced two bills based on those recommendations. The Speaker's Task Force on Water Quality hosted 14 public hearings across the state in 2019 to gather information on addressing Wisconsin's water quality challenges.

"It was a tremendous honor to be involved with this bipartisan task force that spent almost a year bringing together farmers, environmentalists and experts to come up with science-based solutions to ensure we have clean water now and for future generations" Rep. Kitchens said. "I am hopeful that Gov. Tony Evers will see the importance of our work and support the task force's recommendations by signing them into law."

The first bill introduced by Rep. Kitchens would create a nitrogen optimization pilot program where the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection would award grants to farmers or producer-led watershed groups in targeted areas for the purpose of implementing projects that limit nitrogen loading, thereby reducing nitrates in drinking water.

DATCP and University of Wisconsin agencies would study the results and cost-effectiveness of these practices and provide a report to the state Legislature detailing recommendations on how to improve current policies, as well as the feasibility of a permanent nitrogen optimization program.

The second bill would prohibit the sale and use of sealant products that are made with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or coal tar. The particles from these sealants can be easily transported by rain, wind, tires and even feet to other environmental settings.

Studies have shown there are safer, cost-competitive alternatives to PAH tar-based sealants. Modern asphalt-based pavement sealants contain up to 1,000 times lower PAH levels while also having similar life expectancies.

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