

AMANDA STUCK

State Representative ♦ 57th Assembly District

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Rep. Stuck's Statement on Passage of AB 554

MADISON – After yesterday's passage of Assembly Bill 554, which would allow private, out-of-state sewer and water companies to buy or lease municipal water or sewer utilities in Wisconsin, Rep. Stuck issued the following statement.

"I am disappointed that the Wisconsin State Assembly passed AB 554 yesterday, a bill which aims to privatize the most essential resource for humankind, water. Water is a public right and a human necessity, and AB 554 gives out-of-state corporations the ability to have power over the water supply."

"These utilities, water and sewer, are currently operated by local governments and through cooperative agreements in local communities. These utilities are close to and responsible to the communities, and have the primary goals of providing a reliable supply of safe water and doing so at a low cost. On the other hand, the companies that support AB 554 are responsible to one group, their shareholders and have to deliver high rates of return for their investors, often at the expense of ratepayers."

"The private companies that operate water systems across the country have an appalling track record of rate increases, poor system maintenance and faulty billing practices, which can jeopardize the health and safety of the local residents. In fact a study of state by state cost comparison from Food and Water Watch noted that the average water bill for private water utility customers is 33% higher than their public counterparts. And a comprehensive meter analysis from the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management shows that there are less cost savings than claimed by the private utility companies."

"It is clear to me that AB 554 is the wrong direction for Wisconsin. Our water is best controlled by and accountable to the public, not private, out-of-state corporations. I am proud to have voted against this bill in the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities and to oppose it on the floor of the Assembly."

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