



PATRICK TESTIN
STATE SENATOR

PRESS RELEASE

Contact:

Senator Patrick Testin
(608) 266-3123

January 18th, 2017

Testin's First Bill Helps Farmers Fight Blight

Testin Works with Co-authors Sen. Petrowski and Rep. Spiros to Ensure Healthy Crops

Madison, WI – Earlier this week, Senator Patrick Testin (Stevens Point) released his first bill for co-sponsorship. The proposal would enable the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to help farmers fight potato blight.

The proposal specifies that blighted potatoes must be treated within 24 hours of the issuance of a treatment order by DATCP in order to stop spore production. In unfortunate cases, when an affected crop has to be eliminated, action would have to take place within 72 hours of DATCP's decision.

“History has shown that potato blight can be absolutely devastating,” said Testin. “By stipulating quick turnaround times for treatment or elimination, we can protect more farms from exposure, and ensure a healthy crop.”

The bill's time tables take into account the life cycle of potato blight to more effectively combat its spread. Dr. Amanda Gevens, the Associate Professor and Extension Specialist of Potato and Vegetable Pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was an informational resource in the development of this legislation.

“Potato blight is caused by a pathogen which forms spores spread primarily by the air. The blight pathogen can complete its life cycle in a matter of only a few days, destroying the potato plant, producing more spores, and spreading to infect more crops,” explained Dr. Gevens. “Timely eradication of blight is essential to maintaining a healthy potato crop.”

The proposal, which is being circulated for co-sponsorship until Wednesday, January 25th, has already attracted support from key members of the agricultural community.

###