



2019 ASSEMBLY BILL 799

January 24, 2020 - Introduced by Representatives KURTZ, POPE, SUMMERFIELD, NOVAK, SHANKLAND, HEBL, KITCHENS, FELZKOWSKI, ZIMMERMAN, KULP, GRUSZYNSKI, MURSAU, SARGENT, ANDERSON, CONSIDINE, DOYLE, SUBECK, TRANEL, SWEARINGEN, PETRYK, C. TAYLOR, VINING, SPREITZER, EDMING, SINICKI, EMERSON, CABRERA, OHNSTAD, ZAMARRIPA, VRUWINK, BILLINGS, TUSLER, THIESFELDT and ALLEN, cosponsored by Senators JACQUE and OLSEN. Referred to Committee on Government Accountability and Oversight.

- 1 **AN ACT to create** 15.916, 20.285 (1) (ar), 36.25 (8m) and 36.70 of the statutes;
2 **relating to:** creating an office of water policy and making an appropriation.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill creates an Office of Water Policy that is attached to the University of Wisconsin System and housed within the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey of the Division of Extension of UW-Madison. The purpose of the office is to coordinate efforts to manage, conserve, protect, and enhance the productivity of the state's water resources for domestic, municipal, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other private and public uses. The office must engage in specified analytical and evaluative activities, act as a liaison to the Blue Accounting initiative of the commission created by the Great Lakes basin compact, and submit a biennial report to the governor and the legislature on its activities. The office is authorized to provide technical assistance to local governments. The bill requires state agencies, upon the request of the office, to cooperate and assist the office in carrying out its duties and exercising its powers.

The bill requires the governor to appoint as director of the office an individual with experience in managing water resources for a wide range of uses with a priority on experience in both agricultural and industrial uses. The joint committee on legislative organization must concur with the appointment. The bill creates the following duties for the director:

Public dashboard. No later than December 31, 2021, the director must create a publicly accessible user-friendly dashboard for municipal water quality reports, private well data, and surface water quality information. The dashboard must be

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compiled from information from the Public Service Commission, the Department of Health Services, the Department of Natural Resources, campuses of the University of Wisconsin System, the Division of Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and other other credible organizations.

Sharing information. The director must facilitate and make recommendations for sharing information between state agencies, campuses of the University of Wisconsin System, and other stakeholders.

Job opportunities. The director must work with the Department of Workforce Development to analyze national and state demand for job opportunities in the area of water quality and proactively solicit private sector employers to gather data on those opportunities. No later than December 31, 2021, the director must submit a report on the data to the Board of Regents of the UW System. The report must include an analysis of undergraduate and graduate water programs at colleges and universities around the nation and must focus on the strength and nationwide reputation of those programs. The Board of Regents must use the information contained in the report to avoid program repetition in designing new programs that address the demand for water quality programs.

Area water quality challenges. The director must divide the state into areas to better understand each area's diverse and localized water quality issues. No later than December 31, 2021, the director must prepare a report on each area's unique water quality challenges, including their severity, and each area's known level of specific contaminants. The report must also describe the overall success of state and federal water quality programs in each area.

Soil nutrient application planner. The director must work with DNR, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and the Department of Soil Science of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences of the UW-Madison to recommend how to improve or expand the soil nutrient application planner developed by the UW-Madison to better address the unique water quality challenges of the areas described above.

Statewide programs. The director must assess the feasibility of establishing statewide programs for promoting water efficiency and conservation and improving water quality that are similar to statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource programs (commonly known as Focus on Energy programs), which are established and funded by investor-owned electric and natural gas public utilities under current law. The assessment must address the feasibility of establishing a rebate program for purchasing water filtration systems.

For further information see the ***state*** fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

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1 **15.916 Same; attached office.** There is created an office of water policy
2 attached to the University of Wisconsin System under s. 15.03. The office shall be
3 housed within the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey of the Division
4 of Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

5 **SECTION 2.** 20.005 (3) (schedule) of the statutes: at the appropriate place, insert
6 the following amounts for the purposes indicated:

2019-20 2020-21

7 **20.285 University of Wisconsin System**

8 (1) UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND PUBLIC
9 SERVICE

10 (ar) Office of water policy GPR A -0- 150,000

11 **SECTION 3.** 20.285 (1) (ar) of the statutes is created to read:

12 20.285 (1) (ar) *Office of water policy.* The amounts in the schedule for general
13 program operations of the office of water policy.

14 **SECTION 4.** 36.25 (8m) of the statutes is created to read:

15 36.25 (8m) WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS. The Board of Regents shall use the
16 information contained in the report submitted by the director of the office of water
17 quality under s. 36.70 (4) (b) 2. to avoid program repetition in designing new
18 programs that address the demand for water quality programs.

19 **SECTION 5.** 36.70 of the statutes is created to read:

20 **36.70 Office of water policy. (1) DEFINITIONS.** In this section:

21 (a) "Commission" means the Great Lakes commission created by the compact.

22 (b) "Compact" means the Great Lakes basin compact ratified and enacted by
23 chapter 275, laws of 1955.

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1 (c) "Office" means the office of water policy.

2 (d) "State agency" means any office, department, independent agency, council,
3 commission, or board in the executive branch of Wisconsin state government.

4 **(2) PURPOSE.** The purpose of the office shall be to coordinate efforts to manage,
5 conserve, protect, and enhance the productivity of the state's water resources for
6 domestic, municipal, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other
7 private and public uses.

8 **(3) POWERS AND DUTIES.** (a) The office shall collect, analyze, interpret, and
9 maintain the comprehensive data needed for effective water resource planning and
10 effective review of those plans by the governor and the legislature.

11 (b) The office shall evaluate statutory requirements, state agency rules, and
12 legislative proposals related to state water policy and, as determined by the office,
13 make recommendations to the governor, the legislature, and state agencies for
14 implementing or improving those requirements, rules, or proposals.

15 (c) The office shall act as a liaison to the commission's Blue Accounting
16 initiative to assist the state in meeting its obligations under the compact.

17 (d) The office may provide technical assistance to units of government other
18 than the state to assist in planning and implementing water resource policies. The
19 office may charge for any assistance provided under this paragraph. The office may
20 request technical and staff assistance from other state agencies in providing
21 technical assistance to those units of government.

22 (e) The office shall prepare a biennial report of its activities and submit the
23 report to the governor and the chief clerk of each house of the legislature, for
24 distribution to the legislature under s. 13.172 (2), no later than January 15 of each
25 odd-numbered year.

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1 **(4) DIRECTOR.** (a) *Appointment.* Subject to the concurrence of the joint
2 committee on legislative organization, the governor shall appoint as director of the
3 office an individual with experience in managing water resources for a wide range
4 of uses, with a priority on experience with both agricultural and industrial uses. The
5 director shall serve at the pleasure of the governor. The board shall create one
6 full-time position for the director to be funded from the appropriation under s.
7 20.285 (1) (ar).

8 (b) *Duties.* 1. The director shall facilitate and make recommendations for
9 sharing information between state agencies, campuses of the system, and other
10 stakeholders and, as soon as practicable but no later than December 31, 2021, create
11 a user-friendly dashboard for the public to easily access municipal water quality
12 reports, private well data, and surface water quality information that is compiled
13 from information from the public service commission, the department of health
14 services, the department of natural resources, campuses of the system, the Division
15 of Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and other other credible
16 organizations.

17 2. The director shall work with the department of workforce development to
18 analyze demand for public and private sector job opportunities in the area of water
19 quality both nationally and in this state, proactively solicit private sector employers
20 to gather data on prospective job opportunities, and, as soon as practicable but no
21 later than December 31, 2021, submit a report on that data to the board. The report
22 required under this subdivision shall include an analysis of undergraduate and
23 graduate water programs at colleges and universities around the nation and shall
24 focus on the strength and nationwide reputation of those programs.

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1 3. The director shall divide the state into areas for the purpose of better
2 understanding the diverse and localized water quality issues in each area. The
3 number of areas and metrics used to map the areas shall be at the discretion of the
4 director. As soon as practicable but no later than December 31, 2021, the director
5 shall prepare a report on the unique water quality challenges in each area, the
6 severity of those challenges, and the known level of specific contaminants in those
7 areas. The report shall also describe the overall success of state and federal water
8 quality programs in each area, including participation in each program, resources
9 spent on each program, and available metrics to determine the success of each
10 program.

11 4. The director shall work with the department of natural resources, the
12 department of agriculture, trade and consumer protection, and the department of
13 soil science of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences of the University of
14 Wisconsin-Madison to provide recommendations on how to improve or expand the
15 soil nutrient application planner developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison
16 to better address the unique water quality challenges of the areas of the state
17 described in subd. 3.

18 5. The director shall assess the feasibility of establishing statewide programs
19 for promoting water efficiency and conservation and improving water quality that
20 are similar to the statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource programs
21 established under s. 196.374 (2) (a) 1. The assessment shall address the feasibility
22 of establishing a rebate program for purchasing water filtration systems.

