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# JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: Rep. Joel Kitchens  
(608) 266-5350

## **Rep. Kitchens introduces bill banning coal tar sealants**

MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) and Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) have once again introduced a bill that would prohibit the sale and use of coal tar-based sealants, as well as other similar products that contain high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Last year, Rep. Kitchens and Sen. Cowles brought forward the same legislation and it was passed unanimously by the Assembly. However, it did not receive a vote in the Senate because that governing body's final floor session was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bill was drafted based on feedback gathered by the Speaker's Task Force on Water Quality, which hosted 14 public hearings across the state in 2019 to obtain information on Wisconsin's water challenges.

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, also known as PAHs, are persistent organic compounds that come from both natural and man-made sources. Tar-based pavement sealants are a primary source of toxic PAH pollution in Wisconsin.

Research has shown that PAHs are especially harmful to human health and the animals that live in the state's lakes and rivers. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, at least six of the PAHs found in coal tar pavement sealants are probable human carcinogens and one PAH is a known carcinogen.

"The EPA says that banning coal tar sealants may be the most cost-effective way for communities and taxpayers to handle the pollution impacts of these products, and I completely agree," Rep. Kitchens said.

For example, several government entities are currently in the process of spearheading a \$300 million project to remove PAH-contaminated sediment from the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern. A U.S. Geological Survey study has revealed that nearly 80 percent of that PAH contamination has come from coal tar sealants.

"We believe our bill takes a common-sense approach to addressing this issue, especially when we know there are already numerous coal tar alternatives available that are similar in cost and have comparable life expectancies," Rep. Kitchens said. "Plus, they are much safer for both our health and our environment."

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