



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Deb Andraca

23RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

BAYSIDE FOX POINT GRAFTON MEQUON THIENSVILLE WHITEFISH BAY

Great Lakes Erosion Control Loan Program Resolution

Intergovernmental Relations Committee

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

May 6, 2021

Thank you very much to Chairman Czarnecki, members of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee, and to Supervisor Liz Sumner for the opportunity to be here today. I am State Representative Deb Andraca, newly elected to represent the 23rd Assembly District, which includes the beautiful Milwaukee County communities of Whitefish Bay, Fox Point, and Bayside.

The 23rd district stretches along 30 miles of Lake Michigan coast, which is what brings me before you today. Tucked within the over 1000+ pages of state budget is a program that will greatly benefit Milwaukee County and all homeowners and municipalities up and down the shoreline.

Here in Milwaukee County, some of my constituents who own homes along the lakeshore bluff are seeing their property collapse into Lake Michigan due to storms that are being exacerbated by climate change. Heavier rains, lack of ice cover, and lake level fluctuations are all contributing to the problem. Whether the damage is from a sudden storm or gradual erosion, these repairs can be costly and often devastating.

To help private homeowners and municipalities take appropriate preventative measures and repair damaged property, Governor Evers has established the Great Lakes Erosion Control loan program in his 2021-2023 state budget.

This program has two parts, an improved information hub located within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and a revolving loan fund. The information hub will be designed to help individuals find the information they need from what can often be a complicated, technical field. It will include a web page, contacts within DNR, and links to information from the state, the University of Wisconsin, and other academic, government, and private organizations.

The revolving loan fund will assist municipalities and homeowners where the structural integrity of buildings or homes is threatened by erosion of the shoreline. Governor Evers has included \$5 million as an initial capitalization for the program in his current budget.

Our lakefront is our most valuable public resource, but is also incredibly costly and complicated to repair. My constituents tell me information is scattered across multiple sites such as the DNR, the Sea Grant program, the Army Corps of Engineers, UW Madison, and the US EPA just to name a few. One constituent even had to reach out to the Illinois DNR to have her questions answered. And if you do find information, it is often inscrutable to anyone but an engineer.



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The revolving loan fund will help municipalities and individual homeowners take proactive measures to protect property and make repairs when storms occur. It is capitalized with \$5 million, which we want to see included in the final version of the state budget.

In January 2020, the Milwaukee County shoreline sustained major damage from a winter storm, causing bluff erosion, significant damage to public infrastructure, and over \$10 million in damages. Some of our most popular county park property, including the Bradford Beach parking lot, where I love to meet friends and work out on summer mornings, has shrunk in size because of this storm. We can't afford to lose some of the most popular parkland in the county. We know the problem is getting worse, but our beautiful lakefront is worth fighting for.

Local homeowners, municipal leaders, realtors and insurance companies have all voiced support for keeping these funds in the budget, but we need your help. I urge you to vote in favor of the resolution by Supervisor Liz Sumner in support of the Great Lakes Erosion Control program. The more counties we have expressing support for keeping these measures in the budget, the more likely it will happen.

The Great Lakes Erosion Control program can be a great resource for Milwaukee County and all of our lakefront communities. Representative Tip McGuire and I have been working very hard in the State Legislature to make this happen, and we would sincerely appreciate your support of this resolution.

Thank you!

Representative Deb Andraca
23rd Assembly District



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