



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

---

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 22, 2015

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Rep. Gary Hebl, (608) 266-7678

Rep. Cory Mason, (608) 266-0634

## **ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATS: ON EARTH DAY, SUPPORT OUR ENVIRONMENT**

*Gov. Walker's Budget Proposal Weakens Wisconsin's Environmental Legacy*

**(MADISON)** – State Reps. Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie) and Cory Mason (D-Racine), joined by Assembly Democratic colleagues, today held an Earth Day press conference to raise concerns about proposals in the governor's budget related to Wisconsin's natural resources.

The press conference took place prior to the Joint Finance Committee's scheduled executive action on sections of the Department of Natural Resources budget. The DNR budget includes provisions to freeze the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program and eliminate 66 science and education positions from the department.

Hebl and Mason expressed hope that, on Earth Day, the budget-writing committee would acknowledge the harm these budget provisions would cause.

"It is significant that on the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day, a day founded by Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, the Joint Finance Committee will begin to consider a DNR budget that would freeze purchases through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program for the next 13 years," said Hebl.

"Today, the Joint Finance Committee has an opportunity to honor Senator Nelson by vowing to reject the governor's stewardship freeze and to restore science and educational positions to the DNR," Mason said.

The legislators voiced concerns that through his budget bill, Governor Walker is attempting to shy away from science and empirical reasoning when it comes to protecting our environment.

"The Republican budget proposal seeks to remove important science positions from the very department we rely upon to protect our environment," Mason said. "Along with the governor's original proposal to vest more power in his appointed secretary by eliminating the authority of the DNR board, it is clear that the governor is trying to diminish the reliance on science and reasoning from his administration."

"Along with his anti-science budget, the governor has yet to condemn the climate change gag order placed on Board of Commissioners of Public Land Secretary - and daughter of Gaylord Nelson - Tia Nelson," Hebl said. "Today, on Earth Day, we hope the Joint Finance Committee will acknowledge that Gov. Walker's backwards DNR budget weakens Wisconsin's strong legacy of protecting our natural resources."

**-END-**