



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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VanderMeer's Rural Development Committee Passes Two Bills with Bipartisan Support

Madison – Yesterday, the Assembly Committee on Rural Development, chaired by Representative Nancy VanderMeer (R-Tomah), passed two bills out of committee with unanimous and bipartisan support. The first bill, Assembly Bill 266, authored by Representative Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) and Representative Beth Meyers (D-Bayfield), creates a flood risk reduction pilot project in Ashland County and appropriates \$150,000 to the Department of Natural Resources to test natural flood risk reduction practices in that county. The goal is for the results of the pilot project to be used to make recommendations on how existing state policies or funding streams could be adapted to create incentives to protect and restore natural infrastructure and reduce floods.

The committee also passed Assembly Bill 344, authored by Representative Romaine Quinn (R-Barron) and Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green). This piece of legislation exempts property used to provide broadband service to a rural or underserved area from the telephone company tax that is paid by telephone companies in lieu of the general property tax. Assembly Bill 344 focuses on creating a tax incentive for broadband service providers to expand service in underserved areas of the state.

"I was pleased to see both of these pieces of legislation pass out of committee today with bipartisan support. I have made it known that I want to work on bills in the Rural Development Committee that will really make an impact in the rural parts of our state and that can garner bipartisan support, and these bills meet that criteria," VanderMeer said.

"I really like both of the bills we passed today. I like the flood risk protection pilot because I think it's something that should be studied and I think that the pilot project approach is a good way to go about it. It's really applicable to the 70th district, especially considering some of the flooding issues we experienced last summer. What I like about the broadband bill is that it takes a unique approach by incentivizing service providers. In the public hearing on the bill, we heard from providers about the value of the incentive being able to be spread out over multiple projects versus just the projects that were awarded via the broadband expansion grant program. There's value there and I hope we can get both bills on the floor sometime soon," VanderMeer continued.

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The 70th Assembly District includes portions of Monroe, Jackson, Portage and Wood counties.