STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Katrina Shankland
ASSISTANT DEMOCRATIC LEADER
71st ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Media Release

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Contact: Rep. Katrina Shankland
office: (608) 267-9649

Rep. Shankland: DNR Buries Head in Sand on Groundwater Crisis

MADISON – Today, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced that it will no longer be considering the cumulative impacts of high-capacity wells when reviewing well applications, citing a recent legal opinion from Attorney General Brad Schimel. In response, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement:

"I'm deeply disappointed, although not surprised, that the Walker-appointed DNR is putting special interests above the interests of private property owners, sportsmen, our tourism and recreation economy, and our state's waterways. This short-sighted decision will have long-lasting consequences for our lakes, rivers, and streams and will compound water scarcity problems in areas that are already vulnerable, like the Central Sands.

"I'm also extremely concerned by the precedent this decision sets, with a state agency choosing to follow the advisory guidance of one elected official over a unanimous Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling. Our constitution's Public Trust Doctrine explicitly holds that Wisconsin's lakes and rivers are a public resource that must be protected. The DNR should be using evidence-based strategies to manage our natural resources, not making it a policy to follow legal opinions requested by special interests. It's time to remove politics from the DNR and manage our resources using science."

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State Capitol: PO Box 8953, Madison, WI 53708 • (608) 267-9649 • Toll-free: (888) 534-0071
E-mail: rep.shankland@legis.wi.gov • Website: http://shankland.assembly.wi.gov