

The logo features a blue rectangular background with a white wavy top edge. The text "Raising the Bar on Clean Water" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within the rectangle.

Raising the Bar on Clean Water

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Democrats Introduce “Raising the Bar on Clean Water” Legislative Package

MADISON – Today, Democrats in the Wisconsin Legislature debuted the *Raising the Bar on Clean Water* legislative package. The package consists of five bills which repeal a multitude of regressive Republican water policies, reintroduce clean water initiatives that were removed from the governor’s biennial budget by legislative Republicans, and follow the recommendations for water quality made by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Department of Health Services (DHS), and Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Rep. Katrina Shankland (D- Stevens Point) stated, “If there is one thing I hear consistently from folks in all corners of Wisconsin about water quality in our state, it’s this: we must do more, and we cannot afford to wait. Absolutely no one should have to buy bottled water because their water is undrinkable due to contamination, and yet it is all too often the reality. That’s why we are introducing this bill package today, raising the bar on clean water in Wisconsin by taking a comprehensive look back and forward. With Raising the Bar on the Clean Water, we are removing problematic policies that were passed in previous sessions and highlighting what we can and should be doing to ensure that everyone in our state has access to clean water now and in the future.”

“Republicans in Wisconsin have used their majority control in the state legislature to put private interests over the quality of our water for too long,” said Rep. Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie). “I am proud to introduce this legislation to get our state back on track by eliminating Republican rollbacks on the regulation of sulfide ore mining, iron ore mining, wetlands, and shoreland zoning, and by supporting the good work being done by our state agencies.”

“Governor Evers has shown tremendous leadership on clean water since taking office by declaring 2019 the Year of Clean Drinking Water, strategically utilizing his executive authority in directing the DNR to expand NR 151 protections, and including tens of millions of dollars in clean water initiatives in his biennial budget,” continued Rep. Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb). “Unfortunately, Republicans in the legislature stripped many of these initiatives from the budget, delaying already overdue action and pushing the problem downstream. Today, with this legislation, we are once again offering our colleagues the chance to do the right thing. From increasing CAFO fees, to providing funding for lead service line replacement, to addressing nonpoint source water pollution, the legislation we are introducing today will make a real and lasting difference for Wisconsin’s water.”

Sen. Mark Miller (D-Monona) added, “After traveling the state with the water quality task force, the DNR, DHS, and DATCP issued comprehensive recommendations detailing what they need to address our state’s growing water quality problems. Today, we are delivering on those requests and highlighting the importance of issues like rapid response testing for contaminants, funding for the Groundwater Coordinating Council, nutrient management planning, assistance and support for farmers, and community engagement and outreach on clean water and waterborne diseases.”

The *Raising the Bar on Clean Water* legislative package contains five bills: reversing Republican-led laws that rolled back environmental protections (LRB 4127), investing in water quality initiatives recommended in Governor Evers’ budget (LRB 3583), and three omnibus bills (LRBs 5092, 5093, and 5094) including all state agency recommendations to protect our natural resources, the public health, and support agriculture and conservation practices. Copies of all five bills are attached.

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