

H2O, Environment, and CAFOs

MYTH - Lack of environmental citations by DNR.

FACT – Wisconsin has a good environmental track record. In both, Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (PDES) and CAFO, inspections Wisconsin far exceeds the EPA recommended number of inspections. In some cases, Wisconsin is inspecting almost twice the federally recommended amount of facilities. (Source: DNR). The DNR is just as active in enforcement, if not more so, than in the past and any insinuation otherwise is nothing more than a partisan political attack.

MYTH – Republicans caused blue-green algae problems

FACT – The frequency of blue-green found in lakes is mostly due to unseasonably hot weather around stagnant water. But since agriculture run-off can increase the problem, Republicans have passed numerous measures (including Acts 348 & 196 and the Priority Principal Forgiveness Program) that have allocated hundreds of thousands of dollars aimed at stream and surface water mitigation.

MYTH – Don't have clean water & access to clean drinking water has become a major challenge in many communities across Wisconsin as Republicans continue to loosen water standards and turn a blind eye to pollution violations.

FACT – Wisconsin continues to have some of the best and cleanest drinking water in the country. It is why Wisconsin cities continue to pop up on lists of the country's top cities for cleanest water (source: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rodales-organic-life/the-top-10-tapwater-cities-in-america_b_8184138.html). Similarly, the environment tracking group EcoWatch has Wisconsin's ranked as the 12th ranked cleanest state in the country, in part due to our commitment to renewable energy sources. (Source: <https://www.ecowatch.com/exclusive-americas-10-cleanest-and-10-dirtiest-states-1882113202.html>).

MYTH – GOP is allowing the destruction of necessary wetlands that help stop flooding.

FACT – The Federal government, via the Army Corp of Engineers and EPA, regulate the vast majority of wetlands in Wisconsin and in the country, and there is nothing we can do at the state level to reduce those federal regulations. Beyond that Wisconsin continues to lead the nation with the both the breadth and strictness of its state wetland regulation, including Wisconsin being only 1 of 3 states in the nation with remedial wetland statutes. Wisconsin leads the country in how we handle wetlands, and because of that we have some of the best wetlands in the nation. (Source: https://www.aswm.org/pdf/lib/CQ_state_wetland_regulatory_6_26_06.pdf)

MYTH - High cap wells are drying out our lakes.

FACT – Wisconsin continues to have some of the best lakes in the country evidenced by its inclusion on many national best lakes lists. (Source: <https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/best-lake-towns-destinations-in-america-south-lake-tahoe-havasu-city-charlevoix>). To ensure that we continue to have some of the best lakes around, we passed legislation this past session dealing with high capacity wells. Our legislation provides a consistent and uniform manner in which we regulate high cap. wells to provide better clarity for the agricultural industry and environmentalists, alike. In addition, we authorized and funded a comprehensive DNR study on the impact of high capacity wells in the central sands region.

MYTH – CAFOs are hurting the environment, impacting the quality of water wells.

FACT – The Agriculture industry is a central part of the economy in Wisconsin with an impact of \$88.3 Billion. As such, large livestock farms are monitored as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's). CAFO's are regulated by the state DNR in accordance with the U.S. EPA's Clean Water Act under which the DNR implements a myriad regulations, restrictions and prohibitions in order to keep rivers, lakes and groundwater pristine. (Source: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/AgBusiness/CAFO/>). In addition to the myriad of federal and state regulations the DNR implements, local governments can implement their own restrictions on CAFO, which gives Wisconsin a strict 3-level environmental regulatory framework.