



**For Immediate Release
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Rep. Spreitzer: Walker Budget Guts Protections for Public Lands and Natural Resources

MADISON – On February 3, Governor Walker introduced his 2015-2017 state budget. The proposed budget would gut protections for public lands and natural resources that make Wisconsin a great place to live and to visit. Rep. Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit), a member of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage, strongly opposes the changes.

“Governor Walker’s budget shortsightedly handcuffs the highly-regarded Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program,” Rep. Spreitzer said. “The Stewardship Program is essential for Wisconsin to continue our time-honored tradition of protecting our natural resources and maintaining healthy lands and waters. Placing a moratorium on new purchases until at least 2028 sacrifices a program aimed at conservation in order for the Governor to bolster his slash-and-burn budget credentials in Iowa.”

The Governor’s budget also attempts to consolidate his political control by transforming the Department of Natural Resources into an advisory council. This power grab would weaken the DNR’s ability to protect water and air quality, public health, and natural areas.

“Clean air, clean water, public lands, and natural resources are part of what make our state great,” Rep. Spreitzer added. “Wisconsin residents enjoy the great outdoors by hiking, boating, camping, hunting, fishing and more. These activities bring millions of visitors to Wisconsin every year, contributing to an \$18 billion tourism industry.

“I am shocked that Governor Walker would put our tourism industry and natural resources at risk, and I am confident that outdoor enthusiasts from sportsmen to environmentalists will speak out against this attack on our proud tradition of protecting our natural heritage for public use and benefit.”

Rep. Spreitzer and Wisconsin Democrats are focused on rebuilding a strong middle class, restoring economic opportunity for hard-working people, and preserving our natural heritage.

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