

## Preserving the Gift of Clean and Abundant Drinking Water

*You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills...* Psalm 104:10

**Thank you!** Thank you to Governor Evers for placing a strong focus on water in 2019 and to Speaker Robin Voss and the legislature for forming the Speaker's Water Quality Task Force. Protecting Wisconsin's water is an act of caring for God's gift to all of us and protecting those who are most vulnerable. Wisconsin's children are counting on us.

**Immediate Request:** Please support the full funding to monitor, protect, and improve the quality of Wisconsin's drinking water proposed in the Governor's budget.

1. Using \$70 million in bonding to replace lead pipes and manage manure is essential to improving Wisconsin's water quality.
2. Increasing the Department of Natural Resource's (DNR's) staff with five new positions to monitor pollution from concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO's) is basic to helping us protect our drinking water. Increased fees from CAFO's to pay for the positions would bring CAFOs fees more in-line with what they pay in other Midwestern states.

**Near Future:** Please continue to create bipartisan dialogue with expert guidance from the DNR, the Department of Health Services, the Department of Agriculture, the Trade and Consumer Protection, and the University of Wisconsin via the new Speaker's Water Quality Task Force. Please focus on improving the quality of our drinking water and protecting it from pollution from current and emerging toxins, lead, manure, toxic rainwater, high capacity wells, natural causes, etc.

### **About the State of Wisconsin's Water**

Toxic lead and manure pollution are contaminating water supplies throughout our state. Water pollution affects people in both urban and rural communities. Infants and children are especially at risk for serious illnesses and long-term developmental disabilities.

Children with elevated lead levels in their bodies can suffer profound and permanent health problems including damage to brain development. Behavioral problems in school have been linked to high levels of lead in children's blood.

More than 80 water systems in Wisconsin contain lead at dangerous levels, according to EPA data. Spending the \$40 million in bonding in the proposed budget is very much needed.

CAFO's are increasing in number and size in Wisconsin, producing huge amounts of animal waste. When liquid manure is spread on farm fields as fertilizer, it easily seeps into underground water supplies, contaminating well water with dangerous toxins that can cause serious health problems.

A recent study showed that 18% of private wells in the state are contaminated with disease-causing organisms. Another estimates that the wells of 100,000 homes are contaminated with nitrates, which can cause the life-threatening Blue Baby Syndrome. While agriculture is an important part of Wisconsin's economy, it must be carried out in a way that does not endanger public health.

