



# JIM STEINEKE

MAJORITY LEADER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 5<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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## Testimony on Assembly Bill 266

*Flood risk reduction pilot project*  
Assembly Committee on Rural Development

Dear Chair VanderMeer and members,

Thank you for taking the time today to have a discussion on Assembly Bill 266, legislation I'm authoring along with Senator Petrowski and Representative Beth Meyers. In short, the bill aims to promote innovative ways to help reduce the risk of flooding and the sharing of these techniques around the state.

As you likely recall, last summer we saw record rainfall around the state. During this period, many communities around Wisconsin experienced extensive damage amid historic floods. One of the areas hit hardest was in far northern Wisconsin – where roads, culverts and bridges were damaged, and in some cases, even washed away by rising floodwaters.

While not all of the estimated \$88 million worth of damage that occurred between June and September of 2018 could have been avoided, it's believed that improved stream and wetland conditions in the area could have played a vital role in helping to minimize the overall impact.

According to a study completed in 2018 in Ashland County – one of the counties affected most-heavily – there are a number of shovel-ready projects that could help to increase the natural flood storage capacity within the Marengo River Watershed.

While natural infrastructure restoration projects are generally utilized around the country, in Wisconsin, that isn't always the case. Demonstration projects – as proposed by this legislation – are needed to show Wisconsin road crews, emergency service managers and resource professionals that these are viable alternatives that should be considered and implemented to increase natural flood storage capacity and to protect vulnerable public infrastructure.

Assembly Bill 266 would provide a total of \$150,000 in one-time funding to support the design, implementation and evaluation of two to three of these demonstrative projects in Ashland County.

The results of these natural flood reduction projects would then be summarized and provided to the Legislature and to the Division of Emergency Management within the state's Department of Military Affairs. From here, the case studies could be utilized as templates as to how projects of these sorts can be best utilized around the state.

You'll note that I have offered a simple amendment for your consideration. After discussions with my coauthors and stakeholders, we feel the amendment provides further clarity in terms of when these results will be reported to the state – helping to expedite their potential use and impact on other projects around Wisconsin.

Again, Chair VanderMeer, I appreciate you and the members of the committee taking the time to learn more about AB 266. It's my hope to see this legislation advance this session and make a meaningful impact on how we as a state work with our existing resources to prevent flooding in the future.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**BETH MEYERS**

## **Rep. Meyers Testimony for AB 266 in the Assembly Committee on Rural Development**

Thursday, August 15, 2019

10:30 AM

417 North (GAR Hall)

Wisconsin State Capitol

Madison, WI

Chair VanderMeer and members of the committee, thank you for agreeing to hear this bill, and for providing me the opportunity to submit testimony on its behalf.

Assembly Bill 266 was introduced in response to the historic flooding that the state of Wisconsin, including Northern Wisconsin, has recently experienced. The floods of June 2016 and August 2018 were extensive and they were deadly. Roads, culverts, bridges, railroad lines, and homes were damaged or even washed away by rising floodwaters, costing millions of dollars. And more tragic than the physical damage—lives were lost.

We are all aware that natural disasters cannot be avoided, however there are proven ways to mitigate potential flood damage. Implementing natural infrastructure restoration projects increases the natural flood storage capacity of flood zones. Currently, there are natural infrastructure restoration practices that are well-established in other states, but generally underutilized in Wisconsin. Demonstration projects will show Wisconsin road crews, emergency service managers and resource professionals how and where they can increase natural flood storage capacity to protect vulnerable public and private infrastructure.

Assembly Bill 266 would provide the much needed funds to support the design, implementation and evaluation of two to three demonstration projects to test natural flood reduction practices in Ashland County. The results of these projects would then be summarized and provided to the Legislature and to the Division of Emergency Management within the Dept. of Military Affairs.

I am hopeful that the Assembly Committee on Rural Development will take into consideration the importance these demonstration projects will have not just for Northern Wisconsin but for the entire state as it relates to mitigating the damages associated with flooding.

Again, thank you for your consideration of this important proposal and I am hopeful that it will move swiftly through this Committee.



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*Wisconsin Wetlands Association Testimony on AB 266  
Presented by Erin O'Brien, August 15, 2019*

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our testimony in support of AB 266. Wisconsin Wetlands Association is a statewide, non-profit organization. This year marks our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of working to improve understanding of wetland resources and encourage wetlands conservation.

We are grateful for the opportunity we had to work with Representative Steineke and Senator Petrowski on this proposal, and for the support of both Senator Bewley and Representative Meyers for the bill and proposed projects. We are also very pleased that this bill enjoys the support of additional co-sponsors from both houses and both parties.

AB 266 was born from recommendations WWA brought to the legislature last year on opportunities to promote wetlands as solutions to the state's large and growing water management problems, including flooding.

Done right, restoring wetlands can help reduce flood flows and damages, but we see very little use of wetland restoration for water management in Wisconsin today. Practices that we know are common in other states, are not yet well established in Wisconsin.

There are many reasons for this, but perhaps the greatest barriers are that our hazard and resource managers don't have the expertise and don't know how effective and inexpensive wetland solutions can be relative to other interventions. The projects proposed under this bill will help address that gap. Demonstration projects are needed to prove the concept of wetland flood storage solutions and to show resource managers, land use decision makers, and even individual landowners, what it looks like, how much it costs, and how it can help.

At the hearing for the companion Senate bill, the only questions and criticisms of this proposal that arose were "why Ashland County" and "why only one place when flooding is so widespread across the state"?

The answer to why Ashland County is that there is momentum and shovel-ready opportunities thanks to several years of flood hazards ground work we've completed in collaboration with local and regional partners.

WWA's involvement began with tour of the area looking at culvert washouts following the 2016 floods. In those visits, we observed degraded stream and wetland conditions upstream from

every damaged site. Essentially, widespread erosion was draining wetlands, disconnecting streams from floodplains, and sending the rain and snowmelt they were designed to hold straight downstream. We learned that the extent of this damage and how the loss of wetland storage contributed to flood damages was not well known and secured a grant to document these observations and promote restoration opportunities.

This outreach led to a collaboration with Ashland County, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, USGS, and Wisconsin DNR to pursue a FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grant to assess the location and severity of degraded wetland storage and prioritize restoration projects to protect vulnerable infrastructure. Wisconsin Emergency Management recommended the project for funding and it has been provisionally approved by FEMA with a January start date. The budget is \$200k federal share with another \$65k in partner match, with all partners contributing. With this project, Ashland County will be Wisconsin's first community to include wetland restoration strategies in their Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The demonstration projects proposed in this bill, will prime the pump for plan implementation by helping the County work through the design and construction of flood risk reduction restoration practices. But methods and findings from the upcoming FEMA assessment and the demonstration projects will be widely promoted and of great value to any Wisconsin community looking for additional cost-effective ways to reduce flood risks and damages, and to policy-makers interested in supporting larger-scale solutions.

If this bill is enacted, WWA will support the project in a variety of ways, including helping Ashland County prioritize restoration sites among the many shovel-ready options, and advising on project design. We will also help ensure the sites fulfill their demonstration purpose by leading post-construction educational tours for hazard and resource managers, road crews, and others in a position to replicate the assessment and restoration methods in their communities. The flood hazards work we've done to date has attracted statewide and national attention, suggesting interest in outcomes from these demonstration projects will also be high.

WWA's contributions to this work will be self-supported through other grants and membership contributions as part of both our Lake Superior Basin-focused work and our broader local government outreach program. We will not request, nor would we accept, any of the funding appropriated to Ashland County by this bill as the intended use of this funding request is to support project engineering and construction.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony and would be happy to answer any questions you have about the need for or benefits of the proposed demonstration.

**Erin O'Brien, Policy Programs Director / [erin.obrien@wisconsinwetlands.org](mailto:erin.obrien@wisconsinwetlands.org). 608-250-9971**

## **Planning and Implementing Natural Flood Management Solutions**

### *Partnerships in the Lake Superior Basin*

- Ashland County (Land and Water Conservation, Highway, Emergency Management)
- Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- Bad River Tribal Natural Resources Department
- Superior Rivers Watershed Association
- University of Wisconsin Extension
- City of Ashland
- Northland College
- Bayfield County Land and Water Conservation Department
- Wisconsin Coastal Management Program
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Emergency Management
- Wisconsin Department of Administration
- Association of State Floodplain Managers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- United States Geological Survey
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- United States Forest Service
- National Park Service – Great Lakes Network
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- Trout Unlimited – Wild Rivers Chapter
- St. Mary's of University of Minnesota Geospatial Services
- University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute

*For more information on Wisconsin Wetlands Association's flood hazards work contact WWA's Local Government Outreach Specialist/Flood Hazards Project Manager, Kyle Magyera at:*  
*[kyle.magyera@wisconsinwetlands.org](mailto:kyle.magyera@wisconsinwetlands.org) / 608-250-9971*



## Assembly Committee on Rural Development

*2019 Assembly Bill 266*  
*Flood Risk Reduction Pilot*  
*August 15, 2019*

Chairperson VanderMeer and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources for informational purposes on Assembly Bill 266 (AB 266), which provides funding for flood risk reduction pilot projects in Ashland County.

AB 266 provides \$150,000 during the 2019-21 biennium for DNR to, in turn, allocate to Ashland County to fund up to three projects that will test the effectiveness of wetland restoration flood risk mitigation practices.

Wetland restoration is an effective flood risk mitigation tactic and complements resilient infrastructure engineering practices as key elements of a comprehensive flood risk reduction strategy. Several other states are currently planning and evaluating wetland restoration practices as flood risk reduction measures.

In Wisconsin, Ashland County has partnered with the Wisconsin Wetlands Association to apply to FEMA's Advance Assistance program for a grant to fund planning work for implementing the flood risk reduction projects funded by this bill and is collaborating with wetland science professionals from across the country to design and implement a science-based approach to this study. DNR is a project partner and has committed up to 160 hours of in-kind technical support.

If successful, the results of these projects could lead to a change in state agency and local government strategies and approaches for comprehensive flood risk reduction. Implementing such practices on a larger scale could lead to a reduction in costs to the State of Wisconsin associated with major flood restoration activities.

The Department is pleased to share this information and looks forward to working with all partners.

Thank you for your time, and for the opportunity to provide written comments on AB 266.



Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department  
315 Sanborn Ave., Suite 100  
Ashland, WI 54806-1014

email: [maryjo.gingras@co.ashland.wi.us](mailto:maryjo.gingras@co.ashland.wi.us)

Phone: (715) 682-7187

**To:** Wisconsin Legislature

**From:** MaryJo Gingras - Ashland County Conservationist

**Subject:** SB 252 - Support funding for flood risk reduction demonstration projects

**Date:** August 13, 2019

I am writing on behalf of the Ashland County the Land and Water Conservation Department located in northern Wisconsin on beautiful Lake Superior. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SB 252 and please enter it into record.

The Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department works with private landowners, towns, municipalities, and the general public on soil erosion control and water quality projects. We focus on reducing nonpoint source pollution and agricultural runoff to maintain high quality water resources in Ashland County and the greater Lake Superior.

We appreciate SB 252 and are very happy that it is supported by a long list of co-sponsors from both houses and parties. This bill stemmed from recommendations brought forth from Wisconsin Wetlands Association to the legislature last year after two things happened:

- 1) they completed the *Making a Case for Wetlands* study which examined the need for natural flood reduction demonstration projects, and
- 2) they met with landowners and resources managers in the flood damaged Marengo River watershed in Ashland County to investigate opportunities to promote wetlands as solutions to the region's intensified precipitation and flood risks.

There is no one in Wisconsin that is not aware of, or impacted by, the precipitation and flooding events of the past few years. We are all aware of the increase in these events and their likelihood in the future.

In 1961 the National Weather Service developed estimates of precipitation intensity to help guide the engineering and design of water resource infrastructure. These estimates were revised in 2013 and published by **NOAA**, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The 2013 results indicated that the likelihood of a 24-hour rain event observed at a 100-year recurrence interval was 38% greater than calculated in 1961. These data and models are validated by recent events. Total annual rainfall in the Ashland area has increased substantially since the 1950s.

During the summers of 2016 and 2018, many communities around the state experienced historic flood events. In Ashland County flood events were devastating, especially in the Marengo River Watershed. Roads, trails, culverts, bridges and homes were destroyed or completely washed away. There was an estimated \$88 million in damages, some of which could have been avoided. Improved stream and wetland conditions in this region could have played an important role in minimizing the impact.

Land managers, civil engineers, land owners, and natural resource partners are exploring innovative opportunities to restore the degraded hydrologic conditions where loss of wetlands and minimized floodplain storage have created highly susceptible conditions in the Lake Superior Basin.

Done right, restoring wetlands can help improve surface and groundwater quality, recharge groundwater, and reduce flooding, but we see very little use of wetland restoration for water management in Wisconsin today. Practices that may be common in other states are not yet well established here.

Wisconsin natural resource planners and land managers need more tools, including wetlands, to help reduce flood risks and damages. SB 252 will provide funding to design and build natural infrastructure restoration projects in Ashland County. Demonstration projects such as this will assist natural resource managers, hazard planners, emergency management coordinators, and road crews to understand how restoration of upper watershed wetlands, streams, and floodplains can help reduce flooding and protect vulnerable public infrastructure. This funding will complement Ashland County's recently awarded Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant to plan and coordinate these demonstrations in the Marengo River watershed. SB 252 funding will implement the on-the-ground flood reduction practices.

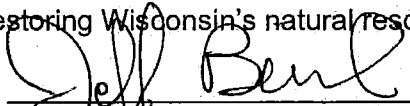
The results of these projects would then be provided to the Legislature and to the Division of Emergency Management within the Department of Military Affairs to be used as case studies and demonstrations as to how projects of these sorts can be further utilized around the state.

**In Summary:**

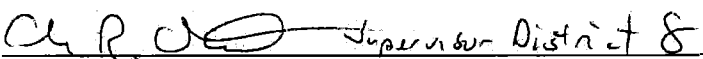
- Healthy wetlands and floodplains help store and slowly release rain and snowmelt, but around the state degraded hydrologic conditions have greatly reduced wetlands' natural ability to store floodwaters. This increases impacts to local roads, culverts, and bridges, and disrupts travel.
- The cost of implementing well-designed restorative conservation practices at critical areas on the landscape is far less costly than rebuilding infrastructure year after year.
- The proposed project will help test and measure natural flood management strategies, and provide a place for teaching resource and hazard managers about the costs and flood risk reduction benefits of wetland, stream, and floodplain restoration practices.
- The results of the projects that will be funded by this bill will be used as templates to show how similar projects can be used to address flooding around the state.


Thank you for your commitment to protecting and restoring Wisconsin's natural resources!

  
Pete Russo, Ashland County Board of Supervisors

  
Jeff Beirl, Ashland County Administrator

  
George Mika, Ashland County Board & Land Conservation Committee

  
Charles Ortman, Ashland County Board & Land Conservation Committee

  
MaryJo Gingras, Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department





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August 14, 2019

Greetings,

I am writing on behalf of the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited. I regret that I am unable to attend the hearing for AB266. Wild River TU would like to be registered in support of AB266 and to please have my letter submitted into official proceedings.

Wild Rivers is a chapter of one of the largest conservation groups in the nation, and consists of the 7 northern counties of Wisconsin, including Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Iron, Burnett, Washburn, and Sawyer counties. Much of the recent storm damage in Wisconsin has occurred in these counties, especially Ashland and Bayfield counties. Many of the impacted waters are coldwater trout streams that provide a huge economic impact to this area by the large number of trout anglers who travel to Northern Wisconsin.

Wild Rivers works closely with many of the statewide conservation groups, including the Wisconsin Wetland Association to help with the planning and implementation of different stream/wetland restoration techniques that reconnect floodplain/riparian areas and increase watershed storage. Wild Rivers has the capacity to assist with developing and restoring these very important wetlands.

William W. Heart, President  
Wild Rivers Trout Unlimited  
29450 Verners Road  
Ashland, WI 54806  
wwheart@centurytel.net

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*Wisconsin Trout Unlimited and its 4000 members work to preserve, protect and restore our trout and salmon fisheries and the watersheds they depend on.*

**Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater and Coastal Management**  
**Testimony on AB 266**  
**Presented by David Fowler Legislative Chairperson, August 15, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on AB 266, my name is David Fowler: I have over 30 years of experience with flooding issues both professionally and personally. I have been a Certified Floodplain Manager since 2002, and I am currently the legislative chairperson of the Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater and Coastal Management (WAFSCM). That I am providing this written testimony. today.

The Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater, and Coastal Management (WAFSCM) is the state chapter for the National Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM). The Wisconsin Chapter promotes sound approaches for managing Wisconsin's floodplain, stormwater, and coastal systems. The organization was formed in 2000 and currently has over 200 members from around the state representing both private and public organizations.

I'm writing today in support of AB 266. The Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater and Coastal Management would encourage support of Assembly Bill 266 for the following reasons

Wisconsin has had numerous severe weather events over the last decade that have resulted in severe flooding both in our urban centers but also in the rural and farming areas of the state. In rural areas such as Ashland County these extreme weather cause severe flooding that damages crops, erodes cropland, damages roads, and culverts and delays planting. This results in long-lasting economic impacts to the local community. Recovery from these events is costly and assistance from the federal government is not always a certainty as the amount of aid can be dependent on the size and scope of the disaster. That can leave the main costs of recovery to the property owners, farmers, state and local governments. To help reduce the flood damages and costs, flood mitigation is the best tool, providing up to \$6 in savings for every \$1 invested in flood mitigation. Done right flood mitigation through restoration of the natural storage features of stream channels and riparian wetlands reduces flood damages and costs. Unfortunately, there are few natural flood storage restoration projects being considered in Wisconsin today, particularly in our rural communities.

It has been my experience both as a flood manager and a Planning Commissioner for my local community that the primary reasons for this lack of projects is not just funding but lack the expertise and or knowledge on how to do it, and missing information on how cost effective it can be at providing flood reduction.

Pilot or Demonstration projects like those proposed under this bill will provide a template for local communities to follow and may result in additional natural flood storage restoration projects involving floodplains and riparian wetlands within the State.

The proposed demonstration projects will also provide valuable information on project benefits by measuring the level of flood reduction provided by using natural flood management strategies. The project will also provide a working model for other local communities facing similar flooding issues. More importantly it can provide data on the costs and benefits of natural channel and floodplain storage restoration practices. Based on my experience I predict that these projects will result in reduced flood damages and save tax dollars at the state and local level. There are similar efforts underway in other states and regions that have shown promising early results on the cost effectiveness of this approach.

The catastrophic floods occurring in the Midwest as I speak and the past flood events in Wisconsin should be a cautionary tale for this State. We need to be prepared and this bill is step in that direction.

I have been deployed to several national disasters mostly along the gulf coast in response to flooding events which provided me with a first hand, on the ground experience with the horrific impacts of flooding. It from this perspective that I provided my comments to you today.

Thank You for your consideration of this matter.



Wisconsin Association for Floodplain,  
Stormwater, & Coastal Management

**Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater and Coastal Management**

**WAFSCM's Mission and Purpose:**

Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater, and Coastal Management (WAFSCM) is the Wisconsin chapter for the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM).

The Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater, and Coastal Management promotes the common interest in floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management to enhance cooperation between the various related private, local, regional, state, and federal agencies; and encourages and ensures effective, new and innovative approaches to managing the state's floodplain, stormwater, and coastal systems. Done right, approaches can reduce flood losses, support sustainable communities and economies and enhance natural ecosystem functions to benefit society.

The organization was formed in 2000 and currently has over 200 members from all over the state of Wisconsin including the public, private and regulatory sectors.

**WAFSCM Mission Statement**

1. Promote public awareness of effective floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management;
2. Promote the professional status of individuals involved in floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management and secure all benefits resulting there from;
3. Promote liaison between individuals concerned with proper floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management and encourage the exchange of ideas;
4. Keep individuals concerned with proper floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management well informed through educational and professional seminars and provide a method for dissemination of information, both general and technical;
5. Inform concerned individuals of pending floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management legislation and other related floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management matters; and
6. Study and support legislation pertinent and necessary to the effective implementation of floodplain, stormwater, and coastal management matters.

**State Issues**

1. Awareness and education for Flood Risk Management
2. Working with Local Municipalities to reduce flooding impacts
3. Coastal Issues on Lake Michigan and Lake Superior (Primarily Bluff Erosion)
4. Funding for State and County Emergency Management (Matching Funds)
5. Funding for Floodplain Mapping—this is critical to Wisconsin communities

**Please do not hesitate to call me if you have follow up questions or concerns.**

**David Fowler Legislative Chairperson WAFSCM**

Cell: 414 559-9883 Office: 608 828-6348 E-Mail: [dave@floods.org](mailto:dave@floods.org)

*Find yourself next to the water.*

**A S H L A N D**

*City of Ashland, Wisconsin*

601 Main Street West — Ashland, WI 54806 — [www.coawi.org](http://www.coawi.org)

August 14, 2019

[Jesse.Johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Jesse.Johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov)

RE: Support for AB 266

Honorable Chairperson and Committee Members:

As Mayor of the City of Ashland, I write in support of AB 266. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend this hearing in person, but would like to be registered in support of this bill. I ask that that testimony contained in this letter be submitted into official proceedings.

Ashland County is one area of the state that Wisconsin Wetlands Association has been doing preliminary research to help address our local concern for runoff into tributaries leading to Lake Superior. Our local economy and our way of life is inextricably tied to health and wellbeing of Lake Superior. In addition, the City of Ashland acquires its drinking water from Lake Superior.

In 2016, our Chequamegon Bay region was stricken with massive flooding that resulted in devastating and expensive culvert washouts and degraded stream and wetland conditions upstream from every damaged site.

In the years since, collaboration has continued between WWA and Ashland County on a FEMA proposal for pre-disaster mitigation funding to develop methods for assessing the location and severity of these types of degraded conditions and prioritizing restoration projects to protect vulnerable infrastructure. Wisconsin Emergency Management has recommended the project for funding. The findings will inform updates to Ashland County's Hazard Mitigation Plan,

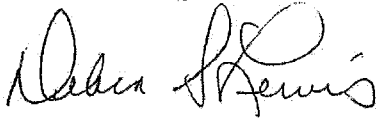
making us the first Wisconsin community to evaluate and prioritize wetland restoration as a pre-disaster mitigation strategy.

The demonstration projects proposed in this bill will help the County work through the design and construction of flood risk reduction restoration practices as well as focus on ways of restoring wetlands and protecting vulnerable transportation infrastructure and benefit farmers as well.

If this bill is enacted, WWA will support the project by helping Ashland County select the best demonstration sites among the shovel-ready options, and will lend wetland restoration expertise to support project planning.

On behalf of the citizens of Ashland, I urge thoughtful consideration to support of this bill.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Debra Lewis".

Mayor Debra Lewis, City of Ashland



August 15, 2019

Honorable Representative VanderMeer  
Assembly Committee on Rural Development

Re: AB 266 – Flood risk reduction pilot project

Dear Representative VanderMeer and Members of the Committee:

As a member of Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF) and a resident of Ashland County, I write to express my appreciation to the sponsors of Assembly Bill 266 for this investment in green infrastructure approaches to flood reduction. Prior to my retirement from the Department of Natural Resources, I worked on several initiatives to reduce runoff in the Lake Superior basin. The demonstration projects that would be funded pursuant to AB 266 would build on a long history of partnerships among local residents, watershed organizations, and government at the local, tribal, state, and federal levels. This investment by state government would be timely and much appreciated.

Throughout Wisconsin, we are experiencing devastating flooding that strains our communities and finances. Statewide, wetland protection and rehabilitation of natural drainage patterns are important tools for local communities to enhance resilience to flooding. WGF appreciates the provision in AB 266 calling for DNR recommendations for how existing state policies or funding streams could be adapted to create incentives to protect and restore natural infrastructure and reduce floods, to be reported to the Legislature and Division of Emergency Management. The only concern about the Bill as written, is the requirement for Ashland County to submit a report summarizing results of the demonstration projects no later than June 30, 2021. A longer time frame is generally required to adequately evaluate performance of a restoration project, sometimes from 5 to 10 years after a project is complete. However, it would be reasonable for the County to submit a progress report on the status of demonstration project plans and installation by June 30, 2021 with a report summarizing the results at a later date.

Thank you for your consideration

Nancy J Larson  
[NLarson@wgreenfire.org](mailto:NLarson@wgreenfire.org)

Wisconsin's Green Fire is a statewide organization dedicated to supporting our conservation legacy by promoting science-based management of natural resources. Our members include career natural resource professionals and scientists from a variety of disciplines throughout Wisconsin.

## Snyder, Rachel

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**From:** Jason Laumann <jlaumann@nwrpc.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2019 10:18 AM  
**To:** Johnson, Jesse  
**Subject:** AB 266 Testimony NWRPC

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Chairperson VanderMeer and Committee:

Regretfully, I am unable attend the August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 hearing on AB 266, but I would respectfully request that my testimony become part of the official record of these proceedings and that copies be distributed to members of the committee.

On behalf of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, I wish to express strong support for AB 266, which would provide funding to explore how wetland and stream restoration can help to reduce risks from catastrophic flooding.

Creating resilient communities and infrastructure, able to withstand flood events like those experienced in 2016 and 2018, has proven to be cost-prohibitive for many rural communities across northwest Wisconsin. Having local demonstration sites where we can test low-cost technologies and nature-based interventions under real world conditions will be invaluable in developing practical flood resiliency solutions for northwest Wisconsin. Establishing demonstration sites in Ashland County will strengthen and build upon other ongoing resiliency projects and programs in the local area and across the State of Wisconsin.

I thank you for your leadership on this issue and offer our full support of AB 266.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jason K. Laumann

Deputy Director  
Northwest Regional Planning Commission  
(715) 635-2197  
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