

Provide Counties with Increased Regulatory Authority to Safeguard their Water

The Citizens of Northwest Wisconsin Request

That the legislature provide northwest Wisconsin counties bordering Lake Superior with increased regulatory authority to safeguard their groundwater and surface water resources.

Background

The current statewide “one size fits all” regulations administrated by the Wisconsin DNR and Department of Ag, Trade & Consumer Protection do not always account for the geological, geographical, topographical or hydrological uniqueness found across this vast state. Local differences are illustrated by the areas of the central sands, Karst areas or heavy clay soils of northern Wisconsin and proximity to inland and Great Lakes resources further exemplify this.

The risks to groundwater and surface water resources posed by a proposed concentrated animal feeding operation to be located in Bayfield County’s Fish Creek Watershed that drains into Lake Superior illustrates this point. Granting Bayfield County the regulatory authority to enact and enforce a more stringent animal waste storage and management ordinance with stricter provisions than the current state standards would significantly reduce this risk.



Agriculture runoff. Photo: UW-Extension, Bayfield County