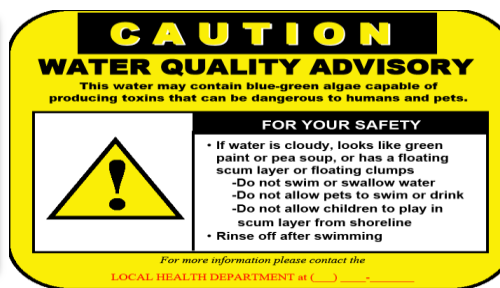


Governor Walker's Version of Being Green: Budget proposal hurts Water Quality



Wisconsin passed model rules to clean up Phosphorus Pollution in 2010

The US-EPA views Wisconsin's *numeric criteria* standard for phosphorus to be a model protocol for setting scientifically credible standards that provide the flexibility needed to address unique watersheds while accommodating stakeholders implementation concerns. The scientific data that underpins the model rule spans 20 years. The public, WDNR staff, industry, municipalities and environmental advocates worked together for over two years to create a system that is flexible and verifiable for improved water quality. These efforts were in response both to a federal requirement under the Clean Water Act and to solve the public health and environmental problem of green, soupy, algae-choked waters.

Governor Walker's Budget proposes gutting the rules.

The Governor's budget proposes to gut the rules to limit phosphorus from both point and non-point source pollution. Even though runoff of nutrients from agricultural fields is one of the most serious drivers of phosphorus pollution of our surface waters, it is virtually unregulated. It is generally much less expensive to control non-point phosphorus runoff from fields than to adapt technology at point sources such as industrial sites and municipal water treatment facilities. In many watersheds, the point sources are doing a relatively good job of controlling phosphorus. The new rules give the point source the option of funding conservation practices on agricultural land that



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will reduce phosphorus more effectively and at a significantly reduced cost, to upgrading their technology-based controls.

What will happen if the Governor and the Legislature vote to weaken the law?

The stakeholders that worked to find reasonable, flexible and effective protocols in some cases are already incorporating the new rules in major systems designs. They will be unable to follow through on innovative, cooperative and enforceable methodologies to reduce phosphorus pollution in our waters.

Prior to adoption of these rules DNR did include limits based on protecting water quality in water pollution permit for from municipal and industrial facilities. Because the 2010 model rules have been approved by the US-EPA they are now the federal standard for issuing permits in Wisconsin. Permits issued without phosphorus limits necessary to meet the standards will be subject to challenge by individuals, organizations and the USEPA.

Is it too late for me to help keep Wisconsin's water clean?

No, you still have time to act. You can let your state elected officials know how much you care about clean water. Let them know how stinky, green water has interfered in your family's ability to recreate or how phosphorus pollution has hurt your small business.

The Governor's proposal to weaken the laws that protect our water are in his state budget. The legislature will take up the budget bill when they return to Madison in early April. Typically there would be statewide hearings and in district listening sessions for legislators to collect public comments. Let them know you won't settle for a repeat of the special session bill that gave a developer an exemption from state water quality standards so he could fill a wetland outside the requirements of the law. .

Watch the MEA website for notices of public hearings and the chance to submit comments on the proposed rolling back of our model rules to reduce phosphorus pollution from both point and non-point sources.

Phosphorus Fact Sheet

Economic Impact of rolling back model phosphorus rules

- Tourism is a **12 Billion** dollar per year industry in Wisconsin, water-based recreation is a significant foundation of tourism.
- Fishing alone accounts for over **30,000 jobs** and brings in **2.75 Billion** dollars per year.
- Wisconsin is second only to Florida in the number of fishing licenses sold each year. The **1.4 million licenses** provide critical annual funding to the WDNR to manage our fisheries and waterways.
- Small, water-based businesses located on lakes or streams choked with putrid algae continue to lose business, often in rural communities largely dependent on tourism dollars.
- Increased uncertainty for facilities that discharge phosphorus pollution – and needless delay in finalized any permits that must be challenged. Those seeking permits will not know which standard to incorporate into their planning.
- Permit challenges by the public may lead to US-EPA administering the permitting process if Walker directs WDNR to ignore federally approved law.
- Loss of opportunity for adaptive management principles in model rules that allows cooperative reduction of phosphorus in an enforceable plan shared by point and non-point sources

Public Health and Environmental threats of rolling back model rules

- Emerging studies show possible links to synergistic effects between algae and other pollutants that increases the endocrine-disrupting effects in animals. Endocrine disruptors are linked to male animals like frogs and fish developing ovaries while losing male reproductive capacities. This same effect has been documented in human populations.
- Toxic algae blooms have caused respiratory symptoms in people and dogs have been reported to die from exposure.
- Public water supplies sourced from surface waters can be impacted.
- Excessive algae disrupts natural aquatic plant and animal communities and degrades and destabilizes ecosystem functions.

Undermining of Public Participation in Development of Phosphorus Rules

- Diverse stakeholders invested over two years in open, democratic processes to shape model rules that balanced the needs of public health and the environment with the needs of industry and municipal wastewater facilities.
- US-EPA approved these rules and promoted them as having methodologies for creating enforceable standards with flexibility for both point and non-point sources, state could lose ability to issue permits if it abandons model rules.