

**Midwest Environmental Advocates,
Sierra Club, River Alliance of Wisconsin,
Clean Wisconsin, Trout Unlimited**

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**Environmental Organizations Praise Attorney General Lautenschlager
for Action to Clean Up Lake Pollution from Cranberry Grower**

Madison – Today several environmental and conservation groups, including the River Alliance of Wisconsin, Trout Unlimited, the Sierra Club, Midwest Environmental Advocates, and Clean Wisconsin, praised Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's environmental record upon her suing a Sawyer County cranberry grower for allegedly polluting a once pristine lake in northern Wisconsin.

Lautenschlager announced that she, along with private lakeshore owners on Lac Courte Oreilles in Sawyer County, filed a public nuisance lawsuit against William Zawistowski to abate alleged pollution of the lake by releases of fertilizer and other pollutants over the course of many years. The suit also seeks cleanup of phosphorus laden sediment contributing to algal blooms and cloudy water that interfere with public boating, fishing and lake enjoyment.

"Unfortunately, the DNR has not used its authority to require this cranberry grower to clean up its act despite the evidence of pollution," according to Melissa Scanlan, Executive Director of Midwest Environmental Advocates, a non-profit environmental public interest law firm. She added, "We're glad to see the attorney general stepping in to protect the general public's waters. In this attorney general, Wisconsin citizens have a friend who is willing to go to bat to protect the public trust in our shared waters."

Sierra Club John Muir Chapter Director Caryl Terrell said, "This case shows the attorney general realizes that the enjoyment of private property depends on the quality of the environment that surrounds it." Terrell continued, "This case is only one in a chain that demonstrate that Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager believes the law should work for the benefit of all citizens and not just a few."

Terrell was referring to Lautenschlager's growing environmental enforcement cases list, her stance against EPA's proposal of weaker mercury emissions from power plants, her challenge to EPA's weaker regulations of expanding power plants, her opposition to the so called "Jobs Creation Act" that weakened navigable waters protection laws, and her support for strong lake shore development standards.

Liz Wessel, Executive Director of Clean Wisconsin, said, "Not since the abolition of the public intervenor have we seen a Wisconsin public official so consistently strong on environmental protection."

Abolished in 1995 by the Thompson Administration, the public intervenors were assistant attorneys general specifically empowered to bring legal actions to protect environmental public rights. Midwest Environmental Advocates recently issued a report detailing the successes of the Public Intervenor's Office, and the environmental losses that Wisconsin has suffered since the Thompson administration abolished the office. The report is available online at http://www.midwestadvocates.org/media/publications/PIOReport_final.pdf.

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