

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Colleagues

FROM: Representatives Loren Oldenburg, Todd Novak

Senator Romaine Robert Quinn

DATE: March 22nd, 2023

RE: Co-sponsorship of LRB-0829/1 & LRB-2504/1 relating to: a pre-disaster flood resilience grant program.

DEADLINE: 5:00pm Thursday March 30th, 2023

Flooding is Wisconsin's most costly disaster, presenting an urgent need for communities to better understand these vulnerabilities and work proactively to reduce risks and damages. Communities currently only observe where repetitive flooding damages occur and fix these roads, bridges, culverts year after year.

Existing state and federal programs primarily focus on clean-up, replacing or repairing structures after a disaster, and are driven by compliance with FEMA regulations. The most heavily funded pre-disaster strategy is moving structures out of mapped floodplains. The assessment and restoration work in these communities often isn't eligible or commonly funded through existing state or federal flood risk reduction programs.

This bill creates a grant program (administered by the DMA Division of Wisconsin Emergency Management) for flood vulnerability assessments aimed at understanding flood flows and erosion hazards and completing projects that mitigate these hazards by restoring healthy wetlands, streams, and floodplains.

The program is structured to improve our understanding about flood vulnerabilities through assessment work and hydrologic restoration projects that can help reduce flood damages. The program's aim is to help solve and prevent future flooding by working at the root cause rather than the current fix and repair approach after the incident.

This grant is targeted to flood-prone communities with areas that have been the site of a presidentially-declared disaster or governor-declared state of emergency for flooding in the past 10 years. An area may also qualify if the local hazard mitigation plan identifies exposure to flood risk.

We intend to request funding during the budget process for this grant program.

This legislation was drafted after working with the Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, and Trout Unlimited.

This legislation is supported by Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, The Association of Regional Planning Commissions, The Nature Conservancy, The Southwest Regional Planning Commission, The Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Trout Unlimited, Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin League of Municipalities, Wisconsin Land Information Association, The American Council of Engineering Companies, Wisconsin State Firefighters Association, Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin Towns Association.

If you would like to co-sponsor this bill, please reply to this email or contact Representative Oldenburg's office at 9196, or Senator Quinn's office at 6-3510. Co-sponsors will be added to the companion bills unless otherwise requested.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires the Division of Emergency Management (division) in the Department of Military Affairs to create and administer a pre-disaster flood resilience grant program. Under the program, the division may provide assessment or implementation grants for projects aimed at identifying and improving flood vulnerabilities and resilience priorities in local governmental units. "Local governmental unit" is defined in the bill to mean a city, village, town, county, regional planning commission, or federally recognized American Indian tribe or band in this state. The division may award to a grant applicant up to \$300,000 per assessment grant, and \$250,000 per implementation grant. The program grants may cover up to 75 percent of the total anticipated project cost, and the applicant must detail from where it will source the remaining funding.

Under the bill, the division may only consider applications for a grant under the program if one of the following applies: 1) the application is for a project area that was the site of a presidentially declared disaster for flooding at any time in the 10 years preceding the grant cycle; 2) the application is for a project area that was the site of a governor-declared state of emergency for flooding at any time in the 10 years preceding the grant cycle; or 3) the application is for a local governmental unit that has a division-approved hazard mitigation plan that identifies localized exposure to flood risk. The division may consult with other state agencies regarding the administration of the program or the review of grant applicants.

Under the bill, persons awarded a grant under the pre-disaster flood resilience grant program must spend all of the program's grant moneys received within two years of receiving the grant moneys, and within 90 days of project completion must provide to the division a report regarding a summary of the project's goals, activities conducted with grant moneys, and data demonstrating project goals to date. No later than July 1, 2024, and annually

thereafter, the division shall submit a report to the governor and appropriate standing committees of the legislature that describes program activities and accomplishments of the preceding year, lists the grant recipients and grants awarded, and makes a recommendation on program continuation and funding levels. However, no report is required for any year that the program is not funded.