



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Environment

FROM: Daniel Bahr, WCA Government Affairs Associate

DATE: January 30, 2020

SUBJECT: Support for Assembly Bill 793

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) supports AB 793 relating to priorities and criteria for the municipal flood control and riparian restoration program and amending administrative rules. This bill provides that any of the activities listed in DNR's rules are eligible for municipal flood control grants and clarifies that the listed activities are not in priority order. The bill also requires DNR, when scoring applications for municipal flood control grants, to consider the cost-effectiveness of the proposed activity. In addition, if an application proposes to acquire and remove structures, the bill requires DNR, when scoring the application, to consider the loss of tax base to be an adverse impact.

Established in 2001, the Municipal Flood Control Grant Program is a DNR program that offers competitive grants for municipalities seeking financial assistance related to flood control. The grant program was established to provide Wisconsin communities with a state-funded source to minimize flooding and flood-related damages. Prior to the creation of this grant, Wisconsin communities were dependent on federal mitigation funds, which are only made available after a Presidential Flood Disaster declaration.

AB 793 revises language in NR 199 that will allow funding to a broader distribution of project types as part of the Municipal Flood Control Grant Program. The bill does not change the eligible projects listed under NR 199, but requires that all eligible projects currently part of the program receive equal consideration and that loss of tax base and cost effectiveness is considered.

Included on the list of eligible activities under the Municipal Flood Control Grant Program are many practices that would not only help local governments deal with high water, but also have a positive impact on water quality. The removal of language that requires prioritization of land acquisition and removal of structures will allow for conservation projects and hydrologic restoration activities such as streambank restoration,

AB 793 Testimony
Page 2
January 30, 2020

erosion control, and restoration of fish and native plant habitat to be considered alongside land acquisition.

WCA respectfully requests that the Committee support AB 793.

Please feel free to contact WCA if you need additional information.