Resolution No. 39-07/19
Supporting Budget Priorities to Improve Local Land and Water Resources

Moved/Sponsored by: Land Conservation Committee

WHEREAS, County Land and Water Conservation Departments Provide boots-on-the-ground technical assistance as trusted advisers to farmers and other landowners, helping them meet mutually agreed-upon and reasonable state conservation standards, while achieving other local business or land management objectives; and,

WHEREAS, County Land and Water Conservation Departments are a proven asset in getting common-sense conservation onto working lands, increasing farm profitability and protecting water quality at the same time; and,

WHEREAS, County Land and Water Conservation Departments do critical work on a variety of conservation issues such as: groundwater and drinking water protection, reducing polluted runoff from agricultural and urban areas, shoreland restoration, lake management planning, invasive species control, and much more; and,

WHEREAS, County Land and Water Conservation Departments have proven to be a cost-effective investment, as the impact of state funding is multiplied several times over through collaboration with federal and private dollars – getting conservation on the land while enhancing local economies; and,

WHEREAS, Conservation efforts help reduce runoff to our state’s waterways, reducing pollutants such as nutrients that lead to harmful algae blooms and result in reduced recreational opportunities that our state’s economy relies on; and

WHEREAS, Contaminated drinking water is a growing crisis, especially in rural Wisconsin. Just under 4 million Wisconsinites—families, businesses, farms, and schools—get their drinking water from groundwater aquifers and over 25% of the State’s residents drink water from private wells, which do not have the same protections as public (municipal) wells, nor are their sources of groundwater adequately understood; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Walworth County Board of Supervisors strongly urges the Wisconsin Legislature to restore conservation funding to the Statutory level set by Wisconsin State Statutes Section 92.14, increasing annual county conservation staffing and support grants from $9 million to $12.4 million and bonding cost-share grants for conservation projects from $3.5 million to $5 million; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Walworth County Board of Supervisors strongly urges the Wisconsin Legislature to restore $150,000 annually to support the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey; and,
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Walworth County Clerk is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, State legislators representing Walworth County, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Nancy Russell
County Board Chair

Kimberly S. Bushey
County Clerk

County Board Meeting Date:

Action Required: Majority Vote X Two-thirds Vote Other

Policy and Fiscal Note is attached.
Reviewed and approved pursuant to Section 2-91 of the Walworth County Code of Ordinances:

David A. Bretl
County Administrator/Corporation Counsel

Nicole Andersen
Deputy County Administrator - Finance

If unsigned, exceptions shall be so noted by the County Administrator.

This Resolution/Ordinance was:
Adopted: Roll Call/U.C. Voice
Rejected/Referred/Laid Over
Ayes: Noes: Absent:
Date July 9, 2019
Policy and Fiscal Note  
Resolution No. 39-07/19  

I. Title: Supporting Budget Priorities to Improve Local Land and Water Resources  

II. Purpose and Policy Impact Statement: Wisconsin State Statutes set requirements for funding county conservation efforts. Section 92.14 of the Wisconsin Statutes state that funding will be appropriated to cover 100% of a first position, 75% of a second position and 50% of a third position. This funding level has not been appropriated for at least a decade. With more and more attention being paid to the quality of our state’s water, there is an effort to encourage our state legislators to fully appropriate the funds set by statutes to support conservation efforts. Support for this level of funding is gaining momentum from both parties in the legislature. This resolution is intended to show support for funding conservation and let the legislature know that this is an important issue for Walworth County.

III. Budget and Fiscal Impact: If the state allocates funds as prescribed by state statutes, the County could receive an additional $65,000 each year to support conservation efforts.

IV. Referred to the following standing committees for consideration and date of referral:  

Committee: Land Conservation Committee Meeting Date: June 17, 2019  

Vote: 5-0  

County Board Meeting Date: July 9, 2019  

Policy and fiscal note has been reviewed and approved as an accurate statement of the probable policy and fiscal impacts associated with passage of the attached resolution.  

David A. Bretl  
County Administrator/Corporation Counsel  
Date 6/21/19  

Nicole Andersen  
Deputy County Administrator – Finance  
Date 6/24/19  

If unsigned, exceptions shall be so noted by the County Administrator.