

RESOLUTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

TO: THE HONORABLE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RE: SUPPORT OF 2017 ASSEMBLY BILL 686 AND WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE ACTION TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE GROUNDWATER QUALITY STATEWIDE

WHEREAS, groundwater and surface waters in Wisconsin are considered *waters of the State*, held in public trust, and regulated primarily by the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, various reports, including the Portage County Groundwater Management Plan, have identified that private drinking water wells of Portage County citizens have been affected with contaminants such as nitrate and pesticides at levels exceeding safe drinking water standards. According to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources data, approximately 20% of Portage County homeowner wells sampled over the last 25 years exceed the State nitrate content standard of 10 parts per million, compared to the State average of 9%; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has historically provided assistance to citizens with high levels of drinking water well contamination through the well compensation grant program (under CH 281.75, Wis. Stats.); and

WHEREAS, a large number of citizens do not qualify for assistance under the current program due to income restrictions, limits on cost of work, and the requirement of livestock to be on the property, and modifying program requirements would allow for greater access to these funds, which could help additional citizens have access to drinking water that meets water quality standards; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Legislature is currently considering, through 2017 Assembly Bill 686, modification of well compensation grant program requirements to expand eligibility to more citizens.

FISCAL NOTE: There are no fiscal obligations for the County associated with this resolution;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Portage County Board of Supervisors strongly supports and encourages the Wisconsin State Legislature to take action to adopt 2017 Assembly Bill 686 to increase assistance to citizens regarding water quality issues; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Portage County Board of Supervisors strongly endorses and encourages the Wisconsin Legislature to move with a sense of urgency to bring forward any additional legislation necessary to further enhance assistance to citizens with regard to improving the water quality of potable water wells, and protect and improve groundwater quality in the State.

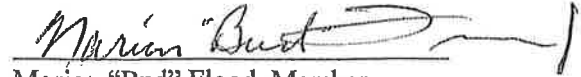
DATED THIS 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2018

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,


PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

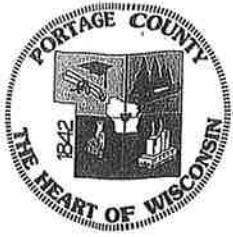
  
Barry Jacowski, Chair

  
Larry Kaikowski, Vice Chair

  
Marion "Bud" Flood, Member

  
Jerry Walters, Member

  
Julie Morrow, Member



# PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

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To: Portage County Board of Supervisors  
From: Jen McNelly, Water Resource Specialist *JM*  
Date: February 8, 2018  
R.e.: Resolution in Support of Assembly Bill 686

In December of 2017, Portage County Staff became aware of proposed Assembly Bill (AB) 686. In this same month, the Wood County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution in support of AB 686. In January 2018 both the Portage County Groundwater Citizen Advisory Committee and the Portage County Planning and Zoning Committee unanimously voted in favor of the resolution support AB 686.

AB 686 legislation, with bipartisan support, that is intended to expand eligibility to the Wisconsin Well Compensation Grant Program and establish a new grant program with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource to provide municipalities with funds for water quality testing.

In order to currently qualify for funds for the Well Compensation Grant Program homeowners must meet identified income levels and for nitrate-nitrogen specific well contamination, wells must have a concentration of at least 40 mg/L and livestock must be served by the well. AB 686 proposes increasing the annual family income limit from \$65,000 to \$100,000. AB 686 also increases the grant award limit to 75% of no more than \$6,000 of the projects eligible costs. Lastly, AB 686 would eliminate the requirement that the well serve livestock.

AB 686 also proposes setting aside \$100,000 in new grant funding through the Department of Natural Resources. This grant funding is intended to be distributed specifically to municipalities to conduct water quality testing on private drinking water wells.

The changes outlined in Assembly Bill 686 would allow more homeowners to become eligible for funds through the Well Compensation Grant Program as well and help municipalities assist and encourage homeowners to have their private wells tested.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at 715-346-1334 or [mcnellyjl@co.portage.wi.us](mailto:mcnellyjl@co.portage.wi.us).