

# WASHINGTON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Date of enactment: June 11, 2025  
Date of publication: July 2, 2025

## 2025 RESOLUTION 23

### Advisory Resolution to Review the Three-Year Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS) Maintenance Requirements

**WHEREAS**, Washington County is required to enforce §145.20(5)(b), Wis. Stats., regarding maintenance of POWTS; and

**WHEREAS**, the language in §145.20(5)(b), Wis. Stats., has not been modified since 1979, when it was created; and

**WHEREAS**, there is no reasonable publicly available data to justify the creation of the 3-year timeline required for the POWTS maintenance program in 1979, and maintenance requirements of POWTS systems vary greatly from state to state; and

**WHEREAS**, POWTS technology, designs, and materials have changed since 1979, including the development of new septic systems that are able to alert homeowners when pumping is necessary; and

**WHEREAS**, design sizes of septic systems are determined by number of bedrooms in a residence, rather than actual usage, site specific conditions or circumstances, age of the system, type of system, and other factors. This can create a disconnect between state requirements, individual preferences, and industry "best practices";

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Washington County Board of Supervisors that this Board supports the State of Wisconsin to examine and review the regulations and requirements of the septic tank maintenance program in the State of Wisconsin.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Washington County urges the Legislature to review the three-year septic tank maintenance policy in order to balance environmental and water quality standards with the protection of personal property rights and freedoms.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Washington County urges the Legislature to review the Administrative Code regarding POWTS on a regular basis to remain relevant with changing technology, improved data collection, and new products and practices.

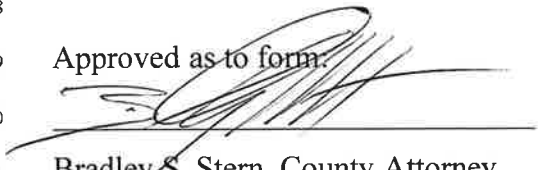
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Washington County requests a study be performed on maintenance requirements and best practices of POWTS to determine what timeframe should be mandated in the Administrative Code for POWTS maintenance.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, the members of the Wisconsin Legislature representing Washington County and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

VOTE REQUIREMENT FOR PASSAGE: Majority


RESOLUTION SUMMARY: Advisory resolution requesting the State Legislature review the POWTS maintenance requirements.

Approved as to form:

  
Bradley S. Stern, County Attorney

Dated 6/13/25

Introduced by members of the LAND USE and  
PLANNING COMMITTEE as filed with the  
County Clerk.

  
Denis Kelling, Chairperson

Approved:

  
Josh Schoemann, County Executive

Dated 16 June 25

Considered June 11, 2025

Adopted June 11, 2025

Ayes 20 Noes 0 Absent 0

Voice Vote \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Veto

☐ Partial Veto

(No fiscal impact.)