

December 18, 2025

Written Testimony Supporting SB 628, the Water Pollution Notification Act

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club. Sierra Club is the largest nonprofit grassroots environmental organization in the United States, with more than 18,000 members and supporters in Wisconsin. We are inspired by Wisconsin's beautiful lakes, forests, rivers, and other natural features, and we care deeply about protecting the health of our communities and the planet.

Clean water is a basic human right, and safe drinking water should not depend on your ZIP code, income, or water source. Every Wisconsinite deserves clean water—and the ability to know when contamination is present. One-third of Wisconsin families rely on private wells, yet private well owners have been left out of basic notification protections that municipal water users receive. These families deserve the same transparency and protection. Clean water is fundamental to community health and to ensuring that Wisconsin residents can live long, healthy, and prosperous lives.

Contamination does **not** announce itself—families may unknowingly drink polluted water for years. Exposure to contaminants in drinking water can cause severe and lifelong harm, including:

- Developmental delays in children
- Cancer
- Endocrine disruption
- Immune system impacts
- Chronic illness

The harm is silent, severe, and preventable. Wisconsin must strengthen detection and monitoring of contaminants such as PFAS, nitrate, arsenic, and lead, which threaten communities across the state.

This bill provides a vital, overdue solution. Private well owners rarely receive notification even when contamination is already known. Municipal water customers receive annual quality reports; private well users do not. The Water Pollution Notification Act simply gives families the information they need to protect their health. Requiring the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to notify county health departments, county land and water conservation departments, and Tribal health departments ensures transparency and timely communication. The first step to solving a problem is knowing you have one.

Wisconsinites have shown **overwhelming support** for clean water and transparency. The 2025 Conservation Congress Spring Hearing results demonstrate strong statewide backing for these protections:



SIERRA CLUB

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Sierra Club – Wisconsin
754 Williamson St.,
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 256-0565

wisconsin.chapter@sierraclub.org
sierraclub.org/Wisconsin

- **68%** supported PFAS safeguards.
- **79%** supported funding to address manure/fertilizer pollution.
- **Voters in all 72 counties** supported requirements that increase transparency about pollution.

These results demonstrate that the Water Pollution Notification Act aligns strongly with the values and priorities of Wisconsin voters. Wisconsinites have made it clear: they want transparency and timely information when their water may be at risk.

Sierra Club supports the bill's requirement that when the DNR identifies groundwater contamination, they must notify county health departments, county land and water conservation departments, and Tribal health departments. This ensures rapid, local communication and empowers families to take protective action.

We respectfully urge you to support the Water Pollution Notification Act so that every Wisconsin family—regardless of where they live—has the fundamental right to clean water and the information they need to protect their health.

Elizabeth Ward
Chapter Director
Sierra Club Wisconsin