



RIVER ALLIANCE
of WISCONSIN

January 19, 2016

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy
Re: SB 567 (Multi-Discharger Variance)

Matt Krueger, River Restoration Director

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and the rest of the Committee, for the opportunity to speak today. I'll be speaking for information only.

Since 2010, Wisconsin has been a national leader on phosphorus policy, drafting and implementing innovative approaches to phosphorus reduction, tied to the permits of point sources, such as factories, wastewater treatment plants, paper mills, food processors, and so on.

With phosphorus trading, watershed adaptive management, and now the Multi-Discharger Variance, the state has made an earnest attempt to reduce phosphorus by way of point source permits. Unfortunately, the Multi-Discharger Variance, like phosphorus trading and watershed adaptive management before it, does not get at the core of the issue, which is too much phosphorus coming from nonpoint sources, mainly agriculture.

This phosphorus turns our lakes and rivers green every August. Beaches close due to toxic algae blooms. Marinas carpeted in blue-green sludge lie dormant, with nobody wanting to expose themselves to the smell, or the serious health risks. Waterfront vacation rental homes show vacancies and financial losses in the peak of tourist season. The Multi-Discharger Variance will likely generate a small amount of funding for nonpoint sources pollution, but it's a drop in the bucket.

The River Alliance of Wisconsin supports phosphorus pollution control generally, but the Multi-Discharger Variance does not do enough to curb our serious phosphorus problem. We applaud the state's efforts to develop innovative solutions to phosphorus pollution, and hope that same innovation continues beyond the Multi-Discharger Variance, whether that's through incentive-based or regulatory approaches.