

Preserving the Gift of Clean, Abundant Water

- **Thank you! The 2017-19 budget proposal updates the definition for lead exposure and increases reimbursement for lead investigations.**

Asks:

- **Allow local governments to raise funds to replace lead pipes on private property (SB 48)**
- **Oppose transferring regulation of large agricultural operations from the DNR to DATCAP, as proposed in the Governor's budget.**

For centuries, our faith traditions have recognized that clean water is a precious gift for which we must be responsible stewards. Decades of effort and public investment to ensure that everyone can have safe and abundant drinking water have contributed to the quality of life we enjoy in Wisconsin.

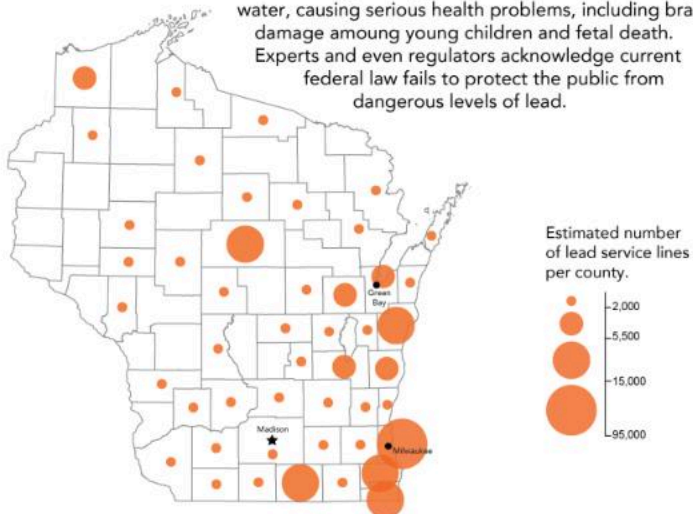
However, toxic lead and manure pollution are contaminating water supplies throughout our state. We must do more to protect our drinking water from these threats. Water pollution affects people in both urban and rural communities. Infants and children are especially at risk for serious illnesses and long-term developmental disabilities.

We support legislation that would improve the quality of drinking water for people across our state, and oppose measures that would undermine our ability to protect Wisconsin's water.

Reduce Lead Poisoning from Water Sources

Dangerous lead pipes abundant in Wisconsin

Wisconsin has at least 176,000 so-called lead service lines carrying water to homes and businesses, according to a very limited EPA study. Such pipes can leach lead into drinking water, causing serious health problems, including brain damage among young children and fetal death. Experts and even regulators acknowledge current federal law fails to protect the public from dangerous levels of lead.



Top five Wisconsin counties with lead service lines



CREDIT: Reporting and data analysis, Silke Schmidt; map and chart, Katie Kowalsky, Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism.

SOURCE: Miguel Del Toral, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Documentation of lead service lines in the other 25 counties could not be identified.

Children with elevated lead levels in their bodies can suffer profound and permanent health problems including damage to brain development. Behavioral problems in school have been linked to high levels of lead in children's blood.

More than 80 water systems in Wisconsin contain lead at dangerous levels, according to EPA data. Lead pipes are especially common in older homes and should be replaced. But water utilities have little flexibility to help homeowners replace lead pipes in their homes and on their property.

SB 48 would allow local communities to provide greater financial assistance to homeowners replacing lead pipes in their homes.

Support Senate Bill 48, which will allow local governments to provide more financial assistance to homeowners to replace lead pipes on their property.

Keep Manure Out of Our Drinking Water

Factory farms are increasing in size and number in Wisconsin, producing huge amounts of animal waste. When liquid manure is spread on farm fields as fertilizer, it can seep into underground water supplies, contaminating well water with dangerous chemicals and organisms that can cause serious health problems.

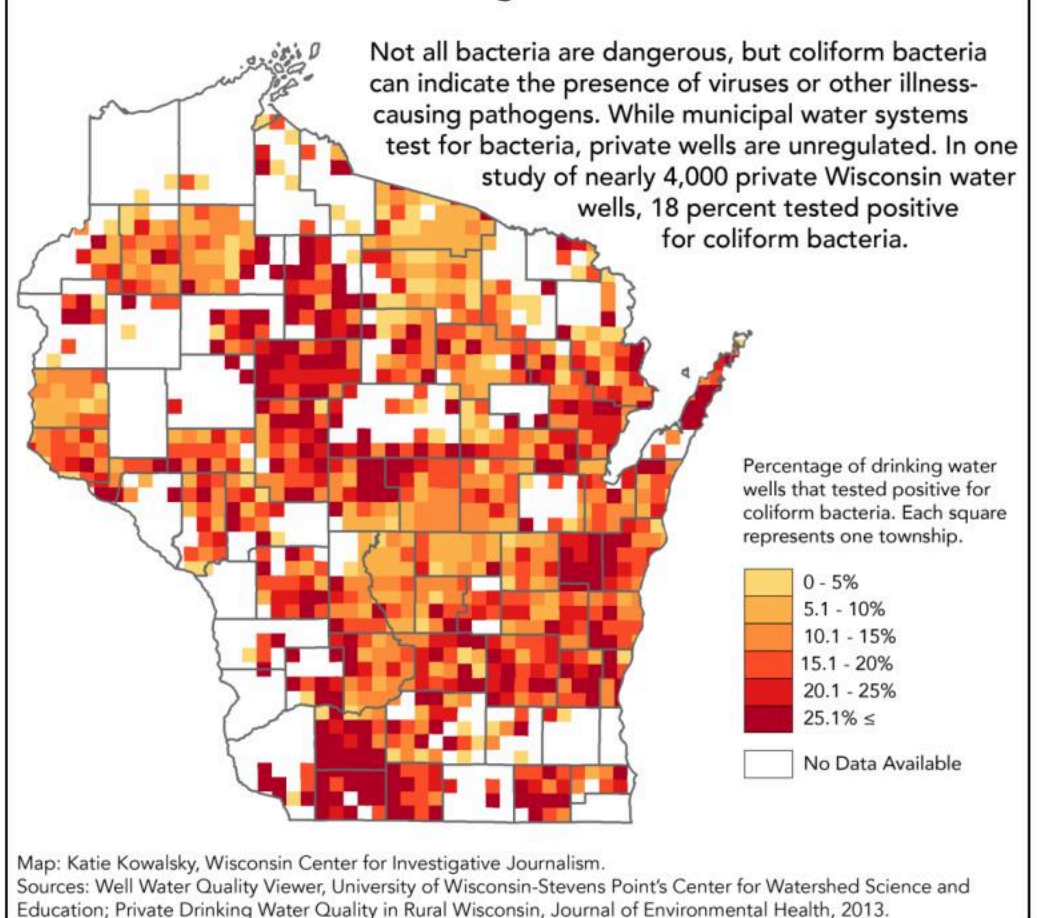
A recent study showed that 18% of private wells in the state are contaminated with disease-causing organisms. Another estimates that the wells of 100,000 homes are contaminated with nitrates, which can cause the life-threatening Blue Baby Syndrome. While agriculture is an important part of Wisconsin's economy, it must be carried out in a way that does not endanger public health.

Governor Walker's proposed budget includes a directive to evaluate moving oversight of factory farms from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCAP).

However, unlike the DNR, DATCAP is not charged with protecting water quality, and it does not have the resources needed to properly enforce the protections that are intended to keep people safe from manure pollution.

Oppose transferring regulation of large agricultural operations from the DNR to DATCAP.

Bacteria contaminate drinking water wells around Wisconsin



"When you drink of clear water, must you foul the rest with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have fouled with your feet?" (Ezekiel 34:17-19)

"For . . . I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink . . ." (Matthew 25:35)

"O Children of Adam! ... Eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters" (The Qur'an, 7:31)

Maps and information from the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism and Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters.