



Testimony of Margaret Krome, MFAI Policy Director

**Hearing, Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Local Government
Regarding Assembly Bill 719
January 12, 2022**

The Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI) expresses its support for A.B. 719, which makes changes to the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program.

The Institute is a non-profit organization focused on advancing sustainable agriculture on a state and federal level. Founded in 1984 in East Troy, Wisconsin, it is our mission to nurture the ecological, social and economic resilience of food and farming systems through education, research, policy, and market development. Our long history of working on agricultural issues includes over 30 years of undertaking collaborative agricultural systems research, conducting farmer education programs, and engaging in state and federal policy and program development, including programs at the University of Wisconsin. We also serve as Collaborator for the Uplands Farmer-Led Watershed Group in SW Wisconsin.

The Institute generally supports legislative and other initiatives that advance energy efficiency and the adoption of renewable energy practices. Because the PACE program has been effective in creating innovative financing mechanisms for such practices, we support the overall goals of A.B. 719.

The provisions of A.B. 719 to which we especially draw your attention pertain to the language that would allow the PACE program to engaging in financing for storm water control measures, among other new applications. Section 6 66.0627 (1) (cg) clarifies that these can be “structural or nonstructural measures, practices, techniques, or devices designed to mitigate the negative impacts of storm water runoff or other surface runoff to the premises, including an infiltration system, wet detention pond, constructed wetland, grassed swale, or vegetative roofing system.” MFAI strongly supports this language as written.

Given the growing scientific recognition that grass-based livestock management systems can significantly increase water infiltration and help manage storm water control, it is important for PACE financing to support new infrastructural investments to install grass-based systems for a portion or all of a farm’s livestock management. Such farms’ fencing and infrastructural installations that are well-suited to the financing offerings of PACE.

For more information about MFAI, our position on AB 719, or our work on related initiatives, please contact Margaret Krome, Policy Program Director at Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (608) 628-2503 mkrome@michaelfields.org