



## Budget Blueprint 2023-25: Promoting Clean Drinking Water and Resilient Farms

To address the water quality challenges many Wisconsin families face, we must commit to long-term solutions and bold action. Over the next decade, we need to dedicate significant financial investments to provide clean drinking water for affected residents and appropriate incentives for farmers to protect water quality. For the 2023-25 State Biennial Budget, we propose the following:

### ENSURING CLEAN DRINKING WATER

**Well contamination:** Improve the well compensation program by expanding eligibility per AB 64/SB 58. Investment: \$1 million increase per year (\$1.2 million per year total)

**Well testing:** Establish a state funded pilot grant program for county-led efforts that prioritize testing for low-income households and high-risk areas. Investment: \$2.5 million per year

### SUPPORT AND ENHANCE CURRENT CONSERVATION EFFORTS

**County conservation staff:** Provide stable, core support to land and water conservation departments, increasing professional staff capacity to provide technical support and expertise for landowner management goals, implementing conservation standards, improving water quality and partnering with the agriculture community. Investment: \$9.4 million increase per year (\$18.7 million per year total, per s. 92.14(6)(b).)

**Farmland preservation:** Modernize the Farmland Preservation Program by increasing and simplifying tax credits. Investment: \$5.6 million increase per year (\$21.6 million per year total)

**Nitrate contamination prevention:** Expand eligibility for the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program to better utilize nitrogen management techniques to reduce nitrate contamination in drinking water in vulnerable parts of the state. Investment: \$900,000 increase per year (\$2.5 million per year total).

**Promoting cover crops:** Maintain the Cover Crop Insurance Premium Rebate Program, incentivizing the planting of cover crops to improve water quality and promote soil health. Investment: \$600,000 per year increase (\$1 million per year total).

### FOSTERING INNOVATION:

**Producer-led watershed protection grants:** Maintain support for the Producer-Led Watershed Grant Program. Investment: \$3 million per biennium.

**Enhancing managed grazing:** Enhance managed grazing livestock production systems by creating a Transition to Grass Pilot Program to assist farmers who intend to strategically transition row crop fields to grass-based grazing or perennial forage production systems for livestock. Investment: \$625,000 per year

**Supporting critical meat processing infrastructure:** Expand the DATCP Meat Processor Grant Program which demonstrated significant oversubscription in 2022. Investment: \$300,000 increase per year (\$500,000 per year total)