

# Guiding Principles for Clean Water Initiative

## Ensure Clean Drinking Water for All Wisconsin Residents

While some initial steps have been taken, substantial investment is needed to guarantee clean, safe drinking water for everyone in Wisconsin, especially our rural communities. Rural Wisconsinites face enormous challenges due to private well contamination, and shrinking municipal water utility budgets. To address these challenges, we should expand access to the well compensation program and allocate state resources for comprehensive testing of private wells and enhanced groundwater mapping. Understanding groundwater movement and sources of contamination will inform land and crop management decisions, improve septic system management, and protect our critical water resources. Achieving this goal requires significant financial investment, and all funding options, both existing and new, must be considered to ensure long-term water security for Wisconsin's residents.

## Strengthen Wisconsin's Agricultural and Environmental Systems

With innovation, improvements to key processes, and more funding for successful programs, our farms and our ecosystems can thrive together. This means increased investment in proven, core conservation programs, like county conservation departments and producer-led watershed groups, along with developing more effective and efficient permitting systems. Innovation should be encouraged through regulatory clarity and increased funding for new technologies that reduce agriculture's environmental impact. Through these combined efforts, Wisconsin can create a more resilient agricultural sector while safeguarding its natural resources.

## Preserve Wisconsin's Rural Heritage

Wisconsin's rural communities are the foundation of our state's cultural and economic identity. But this landscape is experiencing enormous changes due to urbanization, farm consolidation, environmental and climate change concerns, often leading to depopulation, economic instability and other significant challenges. It is crucial that we strengthen rural economies, increase land access, and address environmental health issues. Expanding land access, supporting beginning and next-generation farmers, and promoting adoption of sustainable farming practices and climate-friendly technologies will help our rural communities once again thrive, preserving their cultural heritage and the natural resources we all rely on.