



STATE SENATOR
Eric Wimberger
DISTRICT 30

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CONTACT: Sen. Eric Wimberger
(608) 266-5670

Wimberger Statement on Peshtigo Resolution Supporting Legislature's Sweeping PFAS Bill

As Support Grows among Affected Communities, Governor Evers Doubles Down on Punishing Pollution Victims, Details plan to turn PFAS Trust Fund into a Slush Fund

MADISON, WI — The Town of Peshtigo board adopted [a resolution in support of Senate Bill 312](#), a sweeping PFAS relief bill that would unlock new funding for PFAS-affected communities and extend legal protections to pollution victims. The resolution passed with unanimous support, in a community often seen as ground zero for PFAS contamination in Wisconsin. The board's action comes on the heels of Governor Evers falsely claiming in a recent letter to the bill authors that the Town of Peshtigo and other affected communities don't support the bill.

"This resolution is yet another clear sign that communities devastated by PFAS want the reforms outlined in SB 312. It's clear that Governor Evers has yet to actually take the time to listen to the needs of the people and communities impacted by PFAS. If he had, the Town of Peshtigo wouldn't need to issue resolutions correcting the Governor's false claims and urging him to sign this needed relief into law." Said Wimberger.

The action by the Town of Peshtigo is part of [growing support among local governments](#) for the solutions in Legislature's bill from communities affected by PFAS. The City of Wausau approved a resolution of support last summer, and all three statewide associations representing all three levels of local government support the bill, including the Wisconsin Towns Association, the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Town Chair Jennifer Friday in [a recent letter](#) called out the Governor for [citing the views](#) of a Port Washington resident with a second home in Peshtigo as somehow an authoritative voice for the town. "I Join Senators Wimberger and Cowles in asking you to listen to pollution victims and PFAS-affected communities, and in doing so, ensuring those you are listening to are the community leaders as a whole or, at the very least, a majority as opposed to a select group of activists misrepresenting themselves." said Friday.

Governor Details Plan to turn PFAS Trust Fund into a Slush Fund, Insists on Punishing Pollution Victims

Meanwhile, Governor Evers threatened to veto the PFAS plan approved by the legislature, but demanded that funds be released anyway. In a request to the Legislature's budget committee, the Governor falsely

claimed that the request is "functionally identical" to the Legislature's plan, however the request is missing 17 of the 19 provisions contained in Senate Bill 312.

"This is another attempt by Governor Evers to distract from his insistence on keeping innocent pollution victims financially responsible for pollution they didn't cause, and that he is willing to veto a bill that unlocks millions in PFAS relief to keep that power." Said Senator Eric Wimberger. *"We need the legal reforms contained in SB312. The Governor's funding request simply can't stand up the programs and the changes in law needed to effectively address the problems on the ground and doesn't deliver the solutions that victims and affected communities are asking for."*

"The Governor's request covers just two of 19 provisions in the bill and would effectively turn the \$125M PFAS Trust Fund into a slush fund that won't solve the problems on the ground." Said Wimberger.

Dozens of provisions benefitting affected communities and pollution victims in Senate Bill 312 are absent from the Governor's spending plan. Provisions cut include:

- Protecting innocent landowners from unwarranted actions. This will induce more testing, identification of problems statewide and ensure contamination is addressed;
- Prioritizing state loan funding for the extension of water and sewer service to areas impacted by PFAS contamination;
- Stopping the spread of PFAS by starting remediation at sites with contamination that lack a responsible party or where the responsible party is an innocent landowner;
- Extending assistance under the Well Compensation Grant Program to ensure PFAS impacted residents can properly utilize the program;
- Stopping the spread of PFAS by expanding review of test well drilling in contaminated areas;
- Protecting municipalities from enforcement above and beyond identified standards;
- Increasing the number of private laboratories in the state that test for PFAS to reduce test costs;
- Consideration of a state-sponsored surface water treatment pilot program to improve water quality in a contaminated river, stream or lake;
- Limitations on grant programs to protect funds and ensure grants are used on known substances harmful to human health.

The Governor's veto threat comes with the insistence that DNR keep the authority to dominate pollution victims by ordering them into remediation.

"Governor Evers threatens to veto a transformative PFAS bill because he wants power to order victims of pollution into massively expensive remediation costs or face \$5000 per day fines" said Wimberger. "SB312 protects innocent landowners who unfortunately find themselves in paths of pollution plumes so they don't have to choose between health and financial ruin when testing for PFAS levels. Governor Evers' deliberate mischaracterization of those victims as "polluters" is oppressive bureaucratic domination not in the spirit of the spills law because he wants to reserve the ability to abuse it."

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Senator Eric Wimberger represents the 30th Senate District, which includes parts of Brown, Oconto, and Marinette Counties.