



STATE SENATOR
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DISTRICT 30

December 20, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wimberger Calls on Governor to Work Together to Stop State Domination of PFAS Victims

In letter, Wimberger discusses the need to protect innocent landowners

MADISON, WI — Senator Eric Wimberger (R-Oconto) sent a letter to Governor Evers on the importance of coming to an agreement on legislation that will lead to the effective cleanup of PFAS, while also protecting innocent landowners who have become “emitters” through no fault of their own.

This letter comes after recent news stories about the struggles PFAS victims have been experiencing, including the [DNR holding victims liable for pollution on their land](#) and [insurance coverage being dropped for PFAS victims](#).

“Current law does not distinguish participation or intent in the polluting act,” Wimberger says. “The innocent landowner is subject to the exact same emitter rules and penalties as the point source polluter upstream simply because they possess a contaminated land regardless of how it became contaminated.”

Last session, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 312, which provided the framework to spend the \$125 million provided in the biennial state budget to establish a trust fund to clean up PFAS contamination. Senate Bill 312—which was supported by the Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin League of Municipalities, Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Farm Bureau, and numerous PFAS-affected communities—provided assistance to affected communities, protected victims of PFAS pollution, and lowered the cost of testing for these forever chemicals.

Despite widespread support, Governor Evers vetoed Senate Bill 312 due to its “innocent landowner” provision. This provision contained a list of entities that qualify as innocent landowners that is nearly identical to the list of parties [the Biden EPA](#) has decided not to hold federally liable for contamination. Governor Evers expressed concern about limiting DNR authority to prosecute innocent landowners “just in case”, to which Senator Wimberger asks Evers: ***“What are you envisioning in the “just in case” scenario so I can account for it while protecting innocent landowners?”***

Senator Wimberger finishes his letter with his desire to have a bipartisan solution to an issue that affects Wisconsinites throughout the state, while also reminding Governor Evers that he has also said that innocent landowners should be protected.

Wimberger writes, ***“Please provide me draft language, or even ideas you find acceptable, to protect victims of pollution from unnecessary and oppressive State domination... You expressed publicly in Marinette that you wanted to protect innocent landowners. Let’s do that. But, without your specific desires expressed, I and the legislature are left guessing through trial and error over many years what might be something acceptable.”***

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