



## 2023 SENATE BILL 1070

February 26, 2024 - Introduced by Senators QUINN, COWLES and KNODL, cosponsored by Representatives SAPIK, MURSAU, ARMSTRONG, CALLAHAN, GREEN, S. JOHNSON and SWEARINGEN. Referred to Committee on Housing, Rural Issues and Forestry.

1 **AN ACT relating to:** county forest administration grant eligibility.

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### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill makes a change to eligibility for a county forest administration grant.

Current law authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to make grants to counties that have lands designated as county forest to fund 50 percent of a professional forester for county forest administrator or assistant county forest administrator (county forest administration grant program). Current DNR administrative rules regulating the county forest administration grant program define “forester” as a person, other than one employed by DNR, who has received a bachelor’s or higher degree in forestry from a school of forestry with a curriculum accredited by the Society of American Foresters or an equivalent degree, as determined by the chief state forester, or who is employed as a county forest administrator or assistant county forest administrator in the administration of county forests as of August 12, 1993. This bill replaces the administrative code term “forester” with “county forest administrator” and defines it to mean a person employed to manage a county forest program (excluding a DNR employee) who has any of the following qualifications:

1. A bachelor’s or higher degree in forestry from a school of forestry with a curriculum accredited by the Society of American Foresters or an equivalent degree, as determined by the chief state forester.

2. A bachelor’s or higher degree in natural resources, conservation, or wildlife and three or more years of experience managing a county forest program.

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3. An associate degree in forestry and three or more years of experience managing a county forest program.

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*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

1           **SECTION 1.** NR 47.70 (1) of the administrative code is amended to read:

2           NR 47.70 (1) PURPOSE. The purpose of this section is to establish standards and  
3 procedures for implementation of a grant program to contribute funds towards  
4 payment of the salary and fringe benefits of a professional forester in the position of  
5 ~~administrator or assistant administrator~~ of a county forest administrator and also  
6 payment of a county's dues to a non-profit organization that provides leadership and  
7 counsel to a county forest administrator and serves as an organizational liaison to  
8 the department.

9           **SECTION 2.** NR 47.70 (2) (dm) of the administrative code is created to read:

10           NR 47.70 (2) (dm) "County forest administrator" means an individual who is  
11 employed to manage a county forest program under ss. 28.10 and 28.11, Stats., and  
12 who has any of the following qualifications, except that it does not include an  
13 individual who is employed by the department:

14           1. A bachelor's or higher degree in forestry from a school of forestry with a  
15 curriculum accredited by the Society of American Foresters or an equivalent degree,  
16 as determined by the chief state forester.

17           2. A bachelor's or higher degree in natural resources, conservation, or wildlife  
18 and 3 or more years of experience managing a county forest program under ss. 28.10  
19 and 28.11, Stats.

20           3. An associate degree in forestry and 3 or more years of experience managing  
21 a county forest program under ss. 28.10 and 28.11, Stats.

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1           **SECTION 3.** NR 47.70 (2) (e) of the administrative code is repealed.

2           **SECTION 4.** NR 47.70 (2) (h) of the administrative code is amended to read:

3           NR 47.70 (2) (h) “Independent consulting forester” means a forester, as  
4 ~~described in par. (e)~~ defined in s. NR 1.21 (2) (e), who provides a variety of  
5 professional forestry services on a contract or fee basis and is employed by a county.

6           **SECTION 5.** NR 47.70 (3) (c) of the administrative code is amended to read:

7           NR 47.70 (3) (c) Except as provided in ~~par. pars.~~ (d) and (e), a grant shall be  
8 limited to funding annual salary and fringe benefits for a forester county forest  
9 administrator employed by a county and a county’s annual dues to a non-profit  
10 organization representing their county forest interests.

11           **SECTION 6.** NR 47.70 (3) (d) of the administrative code is amended to read:

12           NR 47.70 (3) (d) A grant under this section may be awarded to a county to  
13 contribute to the funding of an independent consulting forester or the salary of a  
14 forester county forest administrator shared between 2 counties.

15           **SECTION 7.** NR 47.70 (4) (a) of the administrative code is amended to read:

16           NR 47.70 (4) (a) An annual grant award to a county may not exceed 50% of the  
17 position’s annual salary and fringe benefits. Fringe benefit costs may not exceed 40%  
18 of the forester’s county forest administrator’s salary.

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(END)