



2023 SENATE BILL 59

February 14, 2023 - Introduced by Senators COWLES, BALLWEG, CABRAL-GUEVARA, FEYEN, JACQUE, MARKLEIN, PFAFF, QUINN, SPREITZER and TESTIN, cosponsored by Representatives KITCHENS, NOVAK, TRANEL, SHANKLAND, KRUG, J. ANDERSON, ANDRACA, ARMSTRONG, BALDEH, BEHNKE, CONSIDINE, DITTRICH, DONOVAN, EMERSON, GREEN, JOERS, S. JOHNSON, KNODL, MURSAU, O'CONNOR, OLDENBURG, PETRYK, PLUMER, ROZAR, SINICKI, SNODGRASS, SNYDER, SPIROS and VANDERMEER. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Tourism.

1 **AN ACT to amend** 93.59 (2) (a), 93.59 (2) (d), 93.59 (3), 281.68 (1t) (intro.), 281.68
2 (3) (a) 1. and 281.69 (3) (a); and **to create** 281.68 (1) (ar), 281.69 (1b) (br), 281.70
3 (1) (am) and 281.70 (4) (a) 4. of the statutes; **relating to:** eligibility for
4 producer-led watershed, lake, and river protection grants.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill expands eligibility for producer-led watershed protection grants, lake protection grants, and river protection grants.

Under current law, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection administers a program to provide watershed protection grants to producer-led groups made up of farmers located in one watershed. The bill allows grants under the program to be awarded to producer-led groups that are made up of farmers located in adjacent watersheds.

Under current law, the Department of Natural Resources provides lake protection grants and lake management grants for monitoring and improving water quality in lakes and lake classification grants for classifying lakes. Currently, eligible recipients for these grants include nonprofit conservation organizations, counties and municipalities, qualified lake associations, town sanitary districts, qualified school districts, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, and other local governmental units that are established for the purpose of lake management. DNR also provides river protection grants for monitoring and improving water quality in rivers. Currently, eligible recipients for these grants include local governmental units, qualified river management organizations, and

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nonprofit conservation organizations. The bill provides that producer-led groups are eligible to receive lake protection, management, and classification grants and river protection grants provided by DNR. The bill defines “producer-led group” to mean any group that meets the criteria for a producer-led watershed protection grant issued by DATCP.

For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

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

1 **SECTION 1.** 93.59 (2) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

2 93.59 (2) (a) The producer-led group includes at least 5 agricultural producers
3 each of whom operates an eligible farm, as defined in s. 91.86 (1), in one watershed
4 or in adjacent watersheds. The group may include additional agricultural producers
5 who are not required to be operators of eligible farms. In this paragraph, “watershed”
6 means a watershed delineated by the U.S. geological survey using a nationwide
7 system based on surface hydrologic features at the 12-digit basin scale (the
8 hydrologic unit code 12).

9 **SECTION 2.** 93.59 (2) (d) of the statutes is amended to read:

10 93.59 (2) (d) The group assists agricultural producers in the watershed or
11 watersheds under par. (a) to voluntarily conduct nonpoint source water pollution
12 abatement activities.

13 **SECTION 3.** 93.59 (3) of the statutes is amended to read:

14 93.59 (3) A producer-led group that receives, or on whose behalf a legal entity
15 receives, a grant under this section shall annually file a report with the department
16 describing the activities conducted with the grant and the impact of those activities
17 on water quality in the watershed or watersheds under sub. (2) (a).

18 **SECTION 4.** 281.68 (1) (ar) of the statutes is created to read:

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1 281.68 (1) (ar) “Producer-led group” means any group that meets the criteria
2 under s. 93.59 (2).

3 **SECTION 5.** 281.68 (1t) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

4 281.68 **(1t)** LAKE MONITORING AND PROTECTION CONTRACTS. (intro.) The
5 department may award contracts to public groups or persons for the creation and
6 support of a statewide lake monitoring network. The contracts may include
7 payments for the costs of all of the following:

8 **SECTION 6.** 281.68 (3) (a) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

9 281.68 **(3)** (a) 1. Eligible recipients to consist of nonprofit conservation
10 organizations, as defined in s. 23.0955 (1), producer-led groups conducting
11 producer-led group projects, counties, cities, towns, villages, qualified lake
12 associations, town sanitary districts, qualified school districts, public inland lake
13 protection and rehabilitation districts, and other local governmental units, as
14 defined in s. 66.0131 (1) (a), that are established for the purpose of lake management.

15 **SECTION 7.** 281.69 (1b) (br) of the statutes is created to read:

16 281.69 **(1b)** (br) “Producer-led group” means any group that meets the criteria
17 under s. 93.59 (2).

18 **SECTION 8.** 281.69 (3) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

19 281.69 **(3)** (a) A designation of eligible recipients, which shall include nonprofit
20 conservation organizations, producer-led groups conducting producer-led group
21 projects, counties, cities, towns, villages, qualified lake associations, town sanitary
22 districts, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, and other local
23 governmental units, as defined in s. 66.0131 (1) (a), that are established for the
24 purpose of lake management.

25 **SECTION 9.** 281.70 (1) (am) of the statutes is created to read:

