

1971 Assembly Bill 875

Date published:
April 28, 1972

CHAPTER 274, Laws of 1971

AN ACT to create 1.11 of the statutes, relating to governmental consideration of environmental impact.

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

SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE. (1) The purposes of this act are to declare a policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; and to enrich the understanding of the important ecological systems and natural resources.

(2) The legislature, recognizing the profound impact of man's activity on the interrelations of all components of the natural environment, particularly the profound influences of population growth, high-density urbanization, industrial expansion, resource exploitation, and new and expanding technological advances and recognizing further the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to the overall welfare and development of man, declares that it is the continuing policy of this state, in cooperation with other governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations.

(3) In order to carry out the policy set forth in this act, it is the continuing responsibility of this state to use all practi-

cable means, consistent with other essential considerations of state policy, to improve and coordinate plans, functions, programs, and resources to the end that the state may:

(a) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;

(b) Assure safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;

(c) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment while attempting to minimize degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;

(f) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

(4) The legislature recognizes that each person should enjoy a healthful environment and that each person has a responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment.

SECTION 2. 1.11 of the statutes is created to read:

1.11 GOVERNMENTAL CONSIDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. The legislature authorizes and directs that, to the fullest extent possible:

(1) The policies and regulations shall be interpreted and administered in accordance with the policies set forth in this act, and

(2) All agencies of the state shall:

(c) Include in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, a detailed statement, substantially following the guidelines issued by the United States council on environmental quality under P.L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4331, by the responsible official on:

1. The environmental impact of the proposed action;

2. Any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented;

3. Alternatives to the proposed action;

4. The relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; and

5. Any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented;

6. Such statement shall also contain details of the beneficial aspects of the proposed project, both short term and long term, and the economic advantages of the proposal.

(d) Prior to making any detailed statement, the responsible official shall consult with and obtain the comments of any agency which has jurisdiction or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved. Copies of such statement and the comments and views of the appropriate agencies, which are authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards shall be made available to the governor, the department of natural resources and to the public. Every proposal other than for legislation shall receive a

public hearing before a final decision is made. Holding a public hearing as required by another statute fulfills this section. If no public hearing is otherwise required, the responsible agency shall hold the hearing in the area affected. Notice of the hearing shall be given by publishing a class 1 notice, under ch. 985, at least 15 days prior to the hearing in a newspaper covering the affected area. If the proposal has state-wide significance, notice shall be published in the official state newspaper;

(e) Study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources;

(h) Initiate and utilize ecological information in the planning and development of resource-oriented projects.

(3) All state agencies shall review their present statutory authority, administrative regulations, and current policies and procedures for the purpose of determining whether there are any deficiencies or inconsistencies therein which prohibit full compliance with the purposes and provisions of this act and shall propose to the governor not later than July 1, 1972, such measures as may be necessary to bring their authority and policies into conformity with the intent, purposes, and procedures set forth in this act.

(4) Nothing in this section affects the specific statutory obligations of any agency:

(a) To comply with criteria or standards of environmental quality;

(b) To coordinate or consult with any other state or federal agency; or

(c) To act, or refrain from acting contingent upon the recommendations or certification of any other state or federal agency.

(5) The policies and goals set forth in this section are supplementary to those set forth in existing authorizations of agencies.
