



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2017 Wisconsin Act 69
[2017 Assembly Bill 226]

**Assistance for Remediating
Contaminated Wells and Failing
Wastewater Treatment Systems**

2017 Wisconsin Act 69 makes two changes relating to assistance for remediating contaminated wells and failing private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS). First, the Act increases the statutory limit for grants through the well compensation grant program. To be eligible for that grant program, an applicant must have an annual family income of no more than \$65,000 and own or lease property with a contaminated private water supply or a well subject to abandonment. [s. 281.75, Stats.] Prior law authorized the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to award grants through the program that pay up to 75% of no more than **\$12,000** in specified, eligible project costs (i.e., no more than \$9,000). The Act authorizes the DNR to award grants that pay up to 75% of no more than **\$16,000** in eligible project costs (i.e., no more than \$12,000).

Second, the Act authorizes cities, villages, towns, and counties to remediate contaminated wells, fill and seal contaminated wells subject to abandonment, or rehabilitate, replace, or abandon failing POWTS, with the agreement of the owner of the relevant well or system. Alternatively, the Act authorizes cities, villages, towns, and counties to make loans at or below market rates, including interest-free loans, to owners for those purposes. If a city, village, town, or county takes either of those actions, the Act authorizes the city, village, town, or county to recover its costs or collect the loan repayment as a special charge or special assessment.¹ The Act authorizes special assessments collected for those purposes to be collected in installments, and it also authorizes special charges collected for those purposes to be included in a current or next tax roll even if a special charge is not delinquent.

Effective date: November 29, 2017

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November 30, 2017

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¹ Generally, a special charge is imposed against real property for services currently rendered by a municipality. A special assessment is imposed for special benefits conferred upon a property by any municipal work or improvement. [ss. 66.0627 (2) and 66.0703 (1) (a), Stats.]

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov>.