



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2017 Wisconsin Act 71
[2017 Senate Bill 421]

**Unobligated Stewardship Funds
for Water Infrastructure Projects
in State Parks**

Current law authorizes the state to incur public debt for certain conservation activities under the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship program, which is administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The state may incur this debt to acquire land for the state for conservation purposes and for property development activities and may award grants or state aid to certain local governmental units and nonprofit conservation organizations to acquire land for these purposes.

The stewardship program consists of five subprograms. Current law establishes the amounts that DNR may obligate in each fiscal year through 2019-20 for expenditures under each of these subprograms. Generally, under current law, if DNR does not obligate an amount authorized to be obligated for a subprogram in a fiscal year, it may not adjust the annual bonding authority for that subprogram by raising the annual bonding authority for the next fiscal year.

Under current law, the unobligated amounts for the land acquisition, property development and local assistance, and recreational boating aids subprograms from fiscal years 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 are obligated for three specific purposes: infrastructure improvements to the Kettle Moraine Springs fish hatchery, repair or replacement of the Little Falls Dam at Willow River State Park in St. Croix County, and dam safety grants. 2017 Wisconsin Act 71 directs DNR to obligate not more than \$4,500,000 of the unobligated amount for these subprograms from fiscal year 2016-17 to fund critical health and safety-related water infrastructure projects in state parks, prioritizing projects in those state parks with the highest demand.

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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>.