

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

April 22, 2021

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing **Assembly Bill 243** in its entirety.

This bill requires the Governor to allocate \$40,000,000 of the federal funds received by the state under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) to provide forgivable loans to municipalities under the safe drinking water loan program. Those forgivable loans could cover up to 50 percent of the costs of lead service line replacement on private property or be used to provide grants to private users of public water systems to cover up to 50 percent of the costs of lead service line replacement on private property. The bill would also:

- Require the Governor to allocate \$12,000,000 of the federal funds received by the state under ARPA for grants under the urban nonpoint source water pollution abatement and storm water management program.
- Require the Governor to allocate \$6,500,000 of the federal funds received by the state under ARPA for nonpoint pollution abatement under the targeted management runoff program.
- Require the Governor to allocate \$2,000,000 of the federal funds received by the state under ARPA to provide grants for the replacement or remediation of private wells under the well compensation grant program.
- Require the Governor to allocate \$500,000 of the federal funds received by the state under ARPA to establish a grant program to counties for well testing and public education about water quality. The grants could either fund up to \$10,000 per county to test and map privately owned wells or up to \$2,500 per county to provide information to well owners and the general public about the results of a well testing and mapping effort. Counties would have to provide matching funds and report the results of any testing to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Center for Watershed Science and Education.

I object to this bill and am vetoing it because it limits the ability to use federal funds with the flexibility necessary to confront the variety of challenges posed by recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic and respond to Wisconsin's changing needs over the course of the pandemic and our recovery. In Wisconsin, the role of the Governor to oversee use of federal funds under s. 16.54, Wisconsin Statutes is clearly established and has been in place for

decades, a fact that was confirmed by legislative leadership in a letter they sent to me in April 2020. Using this authority, I have already announced my plans to invest the new federal funds under ARPA to various economic recovery and well-being, infrastructure, and pandemic response initiatives. I will continue to utilize the authority provided to the Governor to oversee use of federal funds in a manner that is transparent and consistent with both Wisconsin's needs and federal law.

At the same time, I am however pleased to see that the Legislature has adopted many of the environmental protection and pollution remediation provisions that were included in my proposed 2021-23 biennial budget, even if I disagree with the source of the funding that the Legislature has selected in this particular bill. I look forward to working with the Legislature to include many of these items in the upcoming biennial budget.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor