



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873
Email: fiscal.bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov • Website: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb>

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #572

External Services Position Reallocation (Natural Resources -- Departmentwide)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Page 437, #13]

CURRENT LAW

The Division of External Services within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) serves as the Department's point of contact for the public, businesses, and local governments, for issues related to water quality administered in conjunction with activities under the Division of Environmental Management.

The Division of External Services contains the waterways and wetlands program, which is responsible for: (a) lake, river, and invasive species management; (b) regulation of structures or activities in navigable waters or near shorelands; (c) wetland restoration and mapping; and (d) dam safety and dam safety programs. The Division also contains the Bureau of Customer and Outreach Services, which is responsible for issuing licenses and permits primarily related to fishing, hunting, and recreational vehicles.

Most positions and activities within the Division are funded by the segregated (SEG) conservation fund, including base funding of \$14.7 million and 92.4 positions. Funding is also provided from the segregated environmental fund, GPR, PR, and federal sources. The Division has base funding of \$47.3 million with 364.7 positions from all fund sources, including \$10.61 million GPR with 96.3 positions.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Waterways and wetlands program staff support several Department activities including: (a) administration of Clean Water Act grant programs; (b) waterways and shorelands protection and management; (c) administration of the floodplain management program; (d) floodplain and wetland

mapping; (e) administration of Chapter 30 of the statutes regulating navigable waters, harbors, and navigation; and (f) implementation of the wetland protection permitting process.

2. Assembly 43/Senate Bill 70 would convert 2.0 PR waterways positions and \$174,000 PR annually to GPR and convert 2.0 GPR customer service positions to conservation SEG. The difference in salary and fringe benefits for the positions result in a net increase in GPR funding of \$64,300 annually, but would not increase GPR-funded position authority for DNR.

3. The waterways program receives funding in part from the Coastal Zone Management Interagency Agreement with the Department of Administration (DOA). The agreement provides two types of grants to DNR, technical assistance grants and coastal wetland inventory grants. Funding from the agreement supports positions that perform Great Lakes coastal wetland geographic information system (GIS) mapping and provide technical assistance to coastal area and property owners and local government representatives.

4. DOA reports that in 2019, agency requirements for matching federal funds increased and in 2020, funding from the agreement decreased. The table shows the amount DNR has received from each grant in recent biennia and corresponding match requirements. Currently, 2.0 out of the 4.0 positions assigned to coastal management tasks at DNR are unfunded due to insufficient transfers in recent years from the agreement.

Coastal Zone Management Interagency Agreement Grants

	<u>Technical Assistance</u>		<u>Coastal Wetland Inventory</u>	
	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Required Match</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Required Match</u>
2016-17	\$401,500	50%	\$53,600	50%
2017-18	400,700	50	48,200	50
2018-19	427,000	60	109,000	60
2019-20	248,100	60	113,200	60
2020-21	248,100	60	109,300	60
2021-22	248,100	60	106,300	60

5. Wisconsin has approximately 1,000 miles of coastline on Lake Superior and Lake Michigan across 15 counties. Coastal management protects against erosion, conserves natural habitats, improves water quality and mitigates pollution, and aids in adapting to environmental changes such as rising sea levels and increasing weather intensity. DNR does not anticipate that funding from the Coastal Zone Management Interagency agreement will increase in future cycles, and suggests that reallocation within the Division of External Services will ensure that all four positions are consistently funded in future biennia.

6. The Committee could consider providing an additional \$64,300 GPR annually to fully fund coastal zone management positions within the wetlands and waterways program in the Division of External Services to ensure that all positions assigned to coastal zone management are funded in the 2023-25 biennium [Alternative 1].

ALTERNATIVES

1. Convert 2.0 PR waterways positions and \$174,000 PR annually to GPR. Additionally, convert 2.0 GPR customer service positions to conservation SEG. The difference in salary and fringe benefits for the positions result in net increase in GPR funding of \$64,300 annually.

ALT 1	Change to Base	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$128,600	0.00
PR	-348,000	-2.00
SEG	<u>219,400</u>	<u>2.00</u>
Total	\$0	0.00

2. Take no action.

Prepared by: Margo Poelstra