



Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

Senate Bill 31

April 30, 2019

Thank you Chairman Cowles and committee members. My name is Jim VandenBrook and I am here today representing Wisconsin's Green Fire and am speaking for information only.

In short, Wisconsin's Green Fire believes that SB 31 is an important step in the right direction toward improving the effectiveness of the state's CAFO program to protect water quality. Providing all of the existing CAFO fees directly to the program, as SB 31 proposes, is a very good thing. But we believe that ensuring compliance with CAFO regulations, is a much larger task than the fees can reasonably support. After all CAFOs now produce about 40% of the state's milk and roughly that percentage of manure. This accounts for a great economic impact, but also a large environmental risk that must be managed.

Inspections provide the oversight to enforce the CAFO rules. The DNR *goal* has been to inspect CAFOs at least twice in a five-year period. The Legislative Audit Bureau found that while the number of CAFO inspections increased, the percentage of CAFOs inspected twice within a five-year period has never exceeded 48%. Maintaining a target inspection rate is critical to ensure that facilities and practices are in place to avoid fertilizer or manure spills and to comply with nutrient management plans intended to avoid pollution.

Just as the dairy industry benefits from the high public regard for the safety of its food products due to DATCP's strong enforcement of its dairy inspection program, so too should the public be assured that their water supplies are protected by an adequate CAFO permit inspection program by DNR.

Again, we applaud the direction that SB 31 takes the CAFO program. It is a good first step. As a next step, we believe that the Governor's budget proposal to increase CAFO fees would not only make DNR's inspection program more credible, but would build trust between the dairy industry and its consumers. Further, considering a tiered approach to the fee structure based on CAFO size would parallel the increased inspection effort that larger operations engender.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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Wisconsin's Green Fire: Voices for Conservation (WGF) is an independent nonpartisan organization formed in 2017. WGF supports the conservation legacy of Wisconsin by promoting science-based management of its natural resources