



Legislation Text

File #: 37694, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

Title

Reaffirming the value of environmental education to Wisconsin's citizens and natural resources and urging the Wisconsin Legislature and Governor to restore public funding and support for environmental education in our state to the 2015 - 2017 budget.

Body

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB) was created under Governor Thompson under Wisconsin state statutes (36.54 and 15.915 (6)) to provide leadership for environmental education in Wisconsin with a board that represents private and public sectors; and,

WHEREAS, over a recent 10 year period, WEEB awarded nearly \$4.5 million in grants to schools, non-profits, tribal governments, municipalities, and agencies across Wisconsin; and,

WHEREAS, this funding leveraged an additional \$5 million in support and 140,000 hours of service for projects serving over 900,000 participants; and,

WHEREAS, WEEB has awarded grants to 1,945 WI organizations, including workforce development such as "Jobs in the Forest", "Natural Resource Careers Workshop", "Forester Training in Northwest WI", and "Farm and Field Youth Training Program in Sustainable Agriculture"; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Instruction Environmental Education (DPI EE) Consultant under Wisconsin state statutes (20.285 (rm) and 36.49) provides state level leadership to PK-12 districts with priorities in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in environmental science and environmental education; and,

WHEREAS, funding for this position is not from tax revenue, but from earnings on the state normal school trust fund; and,

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education at UW-Stevens Point (WCEE) was created under Governor Thompson over 20 years ago under state statute (36.25 (29m) to support K-12 environmental education in the state; and,

WHEREAS, the current state general funding results in an additional \$1 million in private and public funding and 18 positions in forestry education, energy education, Green & Healthy Schools, The Nature Center Collaborative, and other environmental education programs annually, and runs programs that train 100,000 students annually introducing them to career paths such as forestry, energy, agriculture, and green business; and,

WHEREAS, training programs that help 1500 public and private teachers annually to enhance student learning by connecting to nature and natural resources; and,

WHEREAS, DNR education programs are essential to ensure citizens and businesses have the information and skills to protect our natural resources upon which a vibrant economies and healthy economies are based,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Common Council of Madison, Wisconsin, recognize the value of these programs to our city and state and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that hat the Mayor and Common Council of Madison, Wisconsin urge restoration of the state statutes creating the WEEB and WCEE, restoration of funding for WEEB forestry education grants and general grants, the DPI EE consultant position and funding of natural resources educator positions at the WDNR.