

Rep. Hebl: Statement on woeful state of Wisconsin's environmental protections

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(Madison) –A report from the Environmental Integrity Project, [as reported in the Wisconsin State Journal](#), shows that from 2008-2018 Wisconsin cut funding for environmental protections more than any other state in the nation- with almost all of the cuts occurring from 2011-2018. Today, Rep. Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie), the ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on the Environment, released the following statement in response:

It's no secret that unified GOP control in Wisconsin was devastating for environmental protections in Wisconsin. I continually spoke out against and fought these rollbacks as they were happening, yet I was met with dismissal and silence.

The Wisconsin GOP rolled back protections on the environment to try to entice a mining company to come to Wisconsin- which it never did. The Wisconsin GOP cut scientist positions at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Wisconsin GOP removed pollution protections. The Wisconsin GOP provided numerous exceptions to wetlands protections for Foxconn. The Wisconsin GOP cut \$43 million dollars from Governor Evers' clean water budget.

Wisconsin decreased its environmental protection funding by 36%, Minnesota increased theirs by 1.5% despite divided government. Michigan increased their funding by 5.7% while having a unified GOP government. This is not necessarily a GOP vs Democrats problem. This is a Wisconsin GOP problem. When faced with the choice between environmental protections and the possibility of corporate profits, they always choose the latter.

Wisconsin must be better about protecting the environment. Every session since their removal, I have introduced legislation to restore environmental protections in mining operations. Every time I have introduced legislation, it has died without ever getting even a public hearing. The Wisconsin GOP has steadfastly refused to take up environmental protection legislation or to properly fund the Wisconsin DNR.

Everybody has a right to clean air and clean water. Everybody should be able to enjoy Wisconsin's environment and natural resources. To be able to do that, we need to have strong protections and ensure that the DNR has enough funding to be able to fulfill their mission statement:

"To protect and enhance our natural resources: our air, land and water; our wildlife, fish and forests and the ecosystems that sustain all life.

To provide a healthy, sustainable environment and a full range of outdoor opportunities.

To ensure the right of all people to use and enjoy these resources in their work and leisure.

To work with people to understand each other's views and to carry out the public will.

And in this partnership consider the future and generations to follow."