BUDGET PRIORITIES MEETING SCRIPT

Meeting with: _____ **Date:** _____

1. Introductions

"Hello, my name is _____ and I'm with _____."

"I am involved with _____ _____ _____."

Optionally, mention a shared connected with the elected official:
"_____ _____ _____."

2. Thank You

"Thank you, _____ and your staff for you work to support conservation in Wisconsin."

Recognize a specific example. WI Land+Water can help provide additional details.

"We especially appreciate _____ _____ _____."

3. Purpose of the Meeting

"We are here today to discuss the importance of Wisconsin's land and water resources and county conservation staff. We are asking for your support in providing **$20.2 million in base funding for county land and water conservation departments in the DATCP budget.**"

Provide Budget Handout to all present. Make sure to keep a copy for yourself.

"This funding will _____

_____

_____

_____

_____."

4. Tell Stories of Success

Let's share a specific success story related to county conservation departments.

"For example, in _____, _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____."

Now let's make sure they understand the how county staff helped make this possible.

"This was made possible by _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____."

5. Describe How This Policy Issue Impacts Your Community

"We're seeing more and more landowners wanting to implement conservation practices on their land. County conservation departments act as crucial advisors for landowners, offering tailored support on conservation programs and practices, from implementing cover crop practices or protecting waterfront properties. They are also instrumental in addressing like runoff and soil erosion, and work closely with farmers to develop nutrient management plans."

You can include other examples specific to your county:

"_____
_____
_____."

You can to elaborate on need to increase base funding for county staff.

Without county staff support, vital state programs like DATCP's Farmland Preservation Program simply would not function. County staff assist Wisconsin farmers in many ways, like supporting producer-led watershed groups, developing nutrient management plans, and improving profitability.

You can provide another example relevant to your county:

"_____
_____
_____."

Now explain why it's so important—show the chart on the back of the Budget Handout.

"By increasing the base funding to meet the county need, departments can plan for the long term, attract and retain talented staff, and even leverage additional funding from other sources. It's an investment that pays off in so many ways."

Now Reference the Return on Investment graphic [$ = $$] on the Budget Handout.

"County conservation staff are critical because **they leverage funding and build partnerships**. For every $1 of state funding, they leverage $2 in additional local, state, and federal funding."

"Think about it – fully funding conservation departments means more support for landowners, more acres of farmland protected, and safe drinking water. Plus, it creates jobs in our communities with local contractors supporting conservation projects. It's really a win-win for natural resources and our economy."

6. Make the Ask

"So that's why we ask that you **<u>support $20.2 million in base funding for county land and water conservation departments in the 2025-2027 budget</u>.** Providing this support will allow counties to address the needs of the community, like protecting farmland, while ensuring safe drinking water.

If you have a specific suggestion on how they can show support, make it here.

"_____
_____
_____."

7. Response and Questions

Anticipate potential question and provide a concise answer. Remember that you can always recommend that they schedule a meeting with Matt Kreuger, WI Land+Water Executive Director.

Potential Question: "Why is base funding so important?"
Answer: "Base funding gives county departments stability for long-term planning and programs. One-time funding can cause uncertainty and make it difficult to keep qualified staff."

8. Closing & Next Steps

"Thank you for your time and consideration, _____.

Before you close, summarize any commitments made and confirm follow-up details that arose during the meeting or the QA:

"_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____."

Remember to leave copies of the Budget Priorities Handout, which features the chart showing the County Conservation Staffing Budget Allocation.

After Meeting Checklist:

- ☐ Take a moment to be proud of your hard work! ☺
- ☐ Send a thank you email to the elected official or staff.
- ☐ Connect with Matt Krueger to provide details on the meeting—this can inform our efforts!
- ☐ Complete any follow-up requests discussed in the meeting. WI Land+Water can help with answering questions, providing data, or sharing additional information.

If you have questions about finding your representatives, requesting meetings, completing this script, or anything else budget related, reach out to Matt Krueger, matt@wisconsinlandwater.org