**Supporting County Conservation Staff**

### Instructions for Personalizing the Op-Ed Templates:

1. Add a specific local conservation story or impact
2. Include personal connection to local land/water resources
3. Share how conservation directly affects your community
4. If you'd like, use first-person perspective to create emotional connection
5. Highlight local examples of conservation work

## Option 1: More Professional

**Headline:** Investing in County Conservation: A Budget Priority for Wisconsin

Wisconsin's natural resources are the foundation of our state, supporting our economy and defining our quality of life. To ensure these resources thrive, we need to invest in the county land and water conservation department professionals that are on the front lines of protecting our land and water. As the state considers the 2025-2027 budget, we urge our legislators to prioritize a critical need: $20.2 million in base funding for county land and water conservation departments.

These departments are not just another layer of bureaucracy. They are essential for providing technical support for conservation practices at the local level, working directly with farmers and landowners. County staff provide the human infrastructure of conservation in Wisconsin.

LWCD staff [*describe their impact in your area or use:* provide technical assistance, develop nutrient management plans, and address issues like soil erosion and water pollution.]

Base funding is crucial because it provides stability for these departments, allowing them to plan for the long term, retain qualified staff, and build trust within the community. One-time funding, while helpful in the short term, does not offer the consistency needed for effective conservation work needed in our local communities. Without adequate funding, vital state programs, like Farmland Preservation, simply would not function. making it harder to have healthy soils and clean drinking water

This is also a proven investment. For every $1 of state funding, these departments leverage $2 in additional local, state, and federal funding, amplifying the impact of the state's investment. Increased funding means more support for landowners, more acres of farmland protected, safer drinking water, and more jobs in local communities.

Our legislators have an opportunity to make a significant impact on local communities and economies by supporting this funding request. By ensuring our county land and water conservation departments are fully funded, we invest in the health of our land, water, and communities for generations to come.

Contact your legislators today and urge them to support $20.2 million in base funding for county land and water conservation departments in the 2025-2027 State Biennial Budget.

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## Option 2: More Personal

**Headline: Investing in County Conservation: A Budget Priority for Wisconsin**

As a lifelong Wisconsin resident *[or other connection to Wisconsin conservation*], I've watched our state's natural beauty shape who we are—from the *[name two beautiful things in your area: rolling farmlands* to the *sparkling lakes]* that define our communities. These aren't just landscapes. They're our heritage and our future. That's why I'm asking our elected officials to make sure that county land and water conservation departments receive the $20.2 million in base funding they critically need from the 2025-2027 State Budget.

County conservation staff aren't faceless government bureaucrats—they're our neighbors, working directly with local farmers and landowners to protect the land and waters we love. They offer personal support for our local ecosystems and agricultural communities.

[*Personalize with a local story: In [Your County], our conservation staff recently helped [specific example of local conservation impact].*]

Providing an increase to the base funding is commitment to stability, and allows conservation departments to retain skilled workers, build trust in their communities, and create long-term solutions. For every $1 of state funding, these departments leverage $2 in additional local, state, and federal resources. This creates local jobs, preserves farmland, and ensures clean drinking water.

This request is about more than numbers—it's about *[explain why it matters to you: preserving the Wisconsin we know and love for future generations]*. By supporting this funding, our legislators can make a direct and meaningful impact in their local communities.

Contact your legislators today. Tell them why fully funding land and water conservation staff matters to you and your community.