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# **Environmental, agricultural groups form initiative to advocate for clean water, thriving farms**

MADISON, Wis. — Four environmental and agricultural groups are coming together to advocate for meaningful state-level policy changes that support clean water and resilient farms.

Clean Wisconsin, the Dairy Business Association, The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association announced the partnership today at a virtual press conference.

“The challenges facing our drinking water and farming community demand innovative solutions. While not always on the same side of policy debates, our groups have had a long history of advocating for these issues,” Mark Redsten, president & CEO of Clean Wisconsin, said. “We’re working together because it’s time we rethink how we protect our water while supporting our farmers.”

The partnering groups outlined [four principles](#) that will guide and inform their efforts to push for robust policy changes, including increasing well testing and well replacement funding, updating the state CAFO program, and bolstering current conservation efforts. The partnership hopes to be a catalyst for critically needed policies, the groups said.

“We all value clean water and we all want economically and environmentally resilient farms. Our groups recognize that caring for both is a shared responsibility,” Tom Crave, president of the Dairy Business Association, said. “Farmers are problem-solvers, and every day we are seeing more and more innovative conservation practices that protect and improve water quality around the state. Moving forward together with others who share this commitment will accelerate progress.”

“As the world’s population increases, finding ways to produce more food while protecting clean water will only become more challenging,” Elizabeth Koehler, director of The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin, said. “Given Wisconsin’s prominent role in agriculture, our state will be an important part of the solution, and collaboration across the public, private and non-profit sectors will be critical.”

For too long, agricultural and environmental issues have been addressed as standalone issues, and policy disagreements have often led to conflicts and inaction on these issues, the groups said. As partners, they hope to change how the state approaches drinking water protection and farmer support.

“We can all agree that the status quo isn’t working for water in Wisconsin, nor agriculture,” said Matt Krueger, executive director of Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association. “Now, more than ever, there is real opportunity — and need — to develop a sustainable vision for both, going forward.”

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On behalf of its more than 30,000 members, supporters and its coalition partners, **Clean Wisconsin** protects and preserves Wisconsin's clean air, water and natural heritage. Learn more at [www.cleanwisconsin.org](http://www.cleanwisconsin.org).

The **Dairy Business Association** is Wisconsin’s leading dairy advocacy group, championing smart and sensible regulations affecting the dairy community. The nonprofit organization is comprised of farmers, milk processors, vendors and other business partners who work collaboratively to ensure that dairy farms of all sizes have the support they need to keep America’s Dairyland strong. More information: [www.dairyforward.com](http://www.dairyforward.com).

**The Nature Conservancy** is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. In Wisconsin, we help farmers improve soil health and protect clean water while sustaining profitability. We also collaborate with communities, governments, business and other nonprofits to protect Wisconsin’s most outstanding natural areas, address climate change and its impacts, and help make cities more sustainable. To learn more, visit [www.nature.org/wisconsin](http://www.nature.org/wisconsin).

**Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association (WI Land+Water)** is a nonprofit organization that supports the local and statewide efforts of all county Land Conservation Committee supervisors and Land Conservation Department staff across Wisconsin. WI Land+Water’s members work directly with landowners, farmers, and citizens to improve land and water management. This boots-on-the-ground approach provides all Wisconsinites with direct access to technical assistance and professional expertise. Learn more at [www.wisconsinlandwater.org](http://www.wisconsinlandwater.org).