RESOLUTION #3
BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESOLUTION
SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 723, INCREASED FUNDING FOR LOCAL
CONSERVATION EFFORTS

WHEREAS, the County Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) is the local delivery mechanism for a wide range of Wisconsin’s natural resource management programs including non-point pollution control, farmland preservation, reclamation of non-metallic mines, invasive species control, woodland management, lakes protection, and more; and,

WHEREAS, LWCD professionals work as trusted, technical advisors to support producer-led watershed groups, assist waterfront property owners, help farmers develop and implement nutrient management plans, and respond to natural disasters like floods, and spend years building the trust to be able to successfully do so; and,

WHEREAS, the conservation practices that LWCD professionals help landowners apply to farm fields, forests, and shorelines have numerous water quality benefits, including: preventing soil erosion and promoting soil health, increasing infiltration into groundwater aquifers, protecting drinking water supply, reducing surface runoff and flood severity, and more; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin codifies the counties’ role in coordinating and implementing local conservation standards in Wis. Stats Chap. 92, and defines a state-supported staffing goal for every LWCD of an average of three positions at 100, 70, and 50 percent support; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has not ensured baseline support of counties by meeting this funding goal since its inception, and current state-funded LWCD staff number 40% fewer than they did 20 years ago; and,

WHEREAS, the return on investment in county LWCDs is high—on top of the valuable, cost-effective services they provide to local communities, they also multiply several times over the impact of state funding by leveraging federal and private grant dollars into more conservation on the land, and more dollars into local economies; and,

WHEREAS, supporting county LWCDs was the top priority voiced by Wisconsinites at statewide Water Quality Task Force hearings and elsewhere over the past year by farm, conservation, environmental and local government groups alike, including Wisconsin Counties Association, Dairy Business Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers, Wisconsin Farm Bureau, and Wisconsin Farmers Union; and,
WHEREAS, Senate Bill 723 seeks to provide an increase of $2,960,900 in baseline support to county LWCDs, resulting in more conservation on the landscape, and better protection of water quality.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association Board of Directors assembled this Fourth day of March, 2020, does hereby urge the Wisconsin State Senate to schedule Senate Bill 723 to be heard on the floor of the Senate prior to the closure of the 2019-20 legislative session, and vote to support the bill, providing necessary state support to counties, recognizing that if we are to improve water quality and achieve clean and safe drinking water and support a viable agricultural industry at the same time, county LWCD professionals are the best and most cost-effective solution we have.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of the resolution be sent to WI Land+Water Conservation Association, all State Legislators, the Governor, DATCP Secretary, DNR Secretary, Wisconsin Counties Association, and Wisconsin Towns Association.