

RESOLUTION #1

LEGISLATIVE STUDY FOR AGRICULTURAL USE VALUE ASSESSMENT PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT

WHEREAS, “Use Value” Property Tax Assessment was fully implemented in 2000, and was intended to improve farm profitability by reducing farm property taxes by basing a parcels property taxes on “Use Value” rather than fair market value and

WHEREAS, many non-farmers such as non-residents of Wisconsin and commercial/development land speculators are greatly benefitting from the “Use Value” Property Tax Assessment, and

WHEREAS, the use value law has a significant impact on local property tax levies, but the exact amount of that impact is difficult to determine, and

WHEREAS, protecting benefits to working farms by keeping them on the land is essential to the economy and environment of Wisconsin, and

WHEREAS, tying the NR 151 “Runoff Rules” to Ag Use Value taxation would have wide benefits to Farmers, residents of Wisconsin, the environment, tourism, and other beneficiaries of Wisconsin’s Natural Resources.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Western Area Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association assembled this 3rd day of October, 2017 does hereby support passage of a comprehensive Legislative Study to evaluate ways to protect and enhance the “Use Value” Property Tax Assessment.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that said Legislative Study should include, at a minimum, the following: Evaluate ways to enhance benefits to Wisconsin farmers while reducing benefits to unintended recipients; Evaluate existing tax policy for its efficacy in achieving farmland protection and nutrient management; Explore the concept of ag use value tax credit not being available to out-of-state residents (if it’s made an income tax credit); evaluate options for returning some of the additional revenue to local governments for conservation; Require that landowners who benefit from agricultural use value taxation meet state soil and nutrient management performance standards; evaluate how changes can lead to benefits to tourism; evaluate how changes could increase access of land to beginning farmers in Wisconsin.

Adopted by the Western Area Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association October 3, 2017.

RESOLUTION #2

SUPPORT FOR AN INCREASE IN THE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILT) FOR COUNTY FOREST LANDS

WHEREAS, collectively, counties manage nearly 2.4 million acres of land in Wisconsin, making county forests the largest public ownership in the state; and

WHEREAS, counties manage forest land using forest best management practices and implementing county conservation goals including following sediment and erosion control practices through coordination with county Land Conservation Departments, Land Conservation Committees, and Land and Water Resource Management Plans; and

WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin currently provides \$.30 per acre to towns with county forest property enrolled in the County Forest Land (CFL) program; and

WHEREAS, this \$.30 per acre goes to pay for town roads, elections, and emergency services; and

WHEREAS, the rate of \$.30 per acre was set in 1989 and has not changed over the past 28 years; and

WHEREAS, costs to provide road, election, and emergency services have increased dramatically since 1989; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Forest Payment in Lieu of Taxes is \$2 per acre; and

WHEREAS, the state of Wisconsin pays, on average, at least \$10 per acre for lands not on the tax roll but owned by the state; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Wisconsin Land+Water Conservation Association respectfully encourages, on behalf of all counties, that the state legislature and the governor increase the Payment in Lieu of Taxes fee paid to towns from \$.30 to \$2 per acre for county forest land enrolled in the County Forest Land program, supporting continued sound management of county forest programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be directed to the attention of the state legislators, the governor, and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Adopted by the Northwest Land+Water Conservation Association on November 29, 2017.

RESOLUTION #3

SUPPORT FOR WETLAND PROTECTION

WHEREAS, wetlands provide valuable functions including clean water, critical fish and wildlife habitat, stormwater attenuation, and recreation and tourism; and

WHEREAS, legislation has been proposed that removes the Department of Natural Resources permit authority for the protection of over one million acres of non-federally protected wetlands in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, in 2001 the Wisconsin legislature with overwhelming support from conservation groups and other Wisconsin citizens unanimously enacted legislation requiring DNR review and permitting before non-federally protected wetlands could be filled; and

WHEREAS, many citizens and conservation groups including Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Wisconsin Trappers Association, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation have called on the legislature to engage stakeholders and the Department of Natural Resources prior to developing legislation affecting Wisconsin's valuable wetlands; and

WHEREAS, these groups and others stand ready to assist in the development of legislation dealing with specific wetland regulatory issues but remain steadfast to protecting Wisconsin's valuable nonfederal wetlands; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Wisconsin Land+Water Conservation Association joins with other conservation groups to respectfully encourage, on behalf of all counties, that the state legislature reject legislation that threatens Wisconsin's wetlands and instead maintain state protections for non-federal and isolated wetlands.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be directed to the attention of the state legislators, the governor, the directors of DNR and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Adopted by the Northwest Land+Water Conservation Association on November 29, 2017.