



Guidance for Public Testimony on Conservation Issues

April 5, 2021

To our Members and Supporters:

The Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) and Governor Evers have both scheduled their spring public budget hearings for April. They are listed in the Hearing Schedules below. We encourage all conservation minded citizens to attend a hearing (virtual is recommended) and testify about conservation issues in Wisconsin! Public voices matter, and this guidance is to inform and support your effective testimony.

This document has four sections.

Section 1. Representing Wisconsin's Green Fire when testifying in public (and some tips)

Section 2. Logistics for the Statewide Joint Finance Committee Hearings

Section 3. Logistics for the Virtual Governor Evers Environmental Hearing

Section 4. Policy Issues Background and Links to information

Section 1. Representation of Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF) in Public Testimony (Joint Finance and Governor's Hearings)

Only Wisconsin's Green Fire Work Group Chairs or members we have designated as subject matter experts may testify publicly on behalf of Wisconsin's Green Fire. We encourage all our members and supporters however to reference WGF information and positions when testifying publicly, and we ask that when doing so you ***make clear you are testifying as an individual.***

-Hearings for Joint Finance start at 10am and end at 5pm, but you should plan to get there and register as early as 8 AM if you wish to testify. Be prepared to spend most of your day at the hearing. Virtual hearings have specific times when the zoom opens.

-You will only have 2 minutes to testify which will allow you to cover 1-2 topics at best. There will likely be no questions from legislators.

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PO Box 1206, Rhinelander, Wisconsin 54501 | 715.203.0384 | Info@wgreenfire.org



-If you go in person to a hearing and want to bring printed testimony bring 20 hard copies with your full contact information on it for the committee members – committee clerks will distribute your testimony.

Section 2. Joint Committee on Finance Hearing Schedule

Hearing attendees must follow the COVID-19 safety protocols at each host facility, including wearing masks and maintaining social distance. Available seating may be limited due to social distancing guidelines.

All public hearings will be streamed by WisconsinEye and can be viewed at [WisEye.org/live](https://www.wisconsineye.org/live).

Friday, April 9, 2021 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)*

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Irvin L. Young Auditorium
930 West Main Street
Whitewater, WI 53190

Public Parking Available in LOT #1

105 North Prince Street
Whitewater, WI 53190

Prior to visiting UW-Whitewater, attendees are encouraged to review the Warhawks Return website for COVID-19 guidelines <https://www.uww.edu/warhawks-return>

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)*

The Hodag Dome School District of Rhinelander
665 Coolidge Avenue
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Thursday, April 22, 2021 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)*

University of Wisconsin-Stout
Great Hall, Memorial Student Center 302 10th Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751



Public Parking Available in LOT #29

400 13th Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751

For more information on UW-Stout's COVID-19 policies and guide to visiting campus, please visit <https://www.uwstout.edu/community-visitors-0>

*The Committee will conclude taking testimony at the time specified. Written comments can be emailed to the Committee at Budget.Comments@legis.wisconsin.gov or www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments, or sent via U.S. mail to: Joe Malkasian, Room 305 East, State Capitol, Madison, WI 53702.

Wednesday, April 28, 2021 Virtual

More information on this hearing will be forthcoming. Please check back on WGF's website for the latest information.

The format will be similar to past hearings and attendees will be asked to fill out a form upon arrival to be added to the queue to testify.

Pre-registration will be required for the virtual hearing. The registration process and details are in development and will be released as soon as possible via the new JFC website, which is also a portal for constituents to provide input: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments

The JFC has also developed a dedicated email address for input only: budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov. You can feel free to submit comments at any time using these links. They are both very easy to use to submit comments.

The first link takes you to all the information you will ever need on the budget and more. Here is a suggestion to access good information:

1. After you click on the link, www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments, click on "Helpful Links", directly below the title.
2. Click on Governor Evers Department of Administration Budget Office Documents
3. Click on "2021-2023 Executive Budget"
4. Scroll down through the state agencies to WDNR, or any other agency you want to read.
5. There are also other budget documents in this link that are full of budget background on all agency's budgets.

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Section 3. Governor Evers Budget Hearing Schedule

Governor Evers is also hosting a number of listening sessions. His session on “Climate change and our environment” is April 21, 2021 at 6 pm. All the Governor’s Listening Sessions are Virtual. The link to register is here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pdeGqpjwiEt221fzsvTa7mXnGIQ43pjG>

The Governor’s staff has prepared a two-page document highlighting climate and environmental issues of importance to the Governor. Here is a link:

https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/BouncebackLS_OurEnvironment.pdf

You may talk about any environmental issue during this listening session but you might want to read through this two-page highlight paper. Many are the same priority issues as Wisconsin’s Green Fire.

Section 4. Wisconsin’s Green Fire 2021-2023 Budget Issues

Here are some brief talking points on some major budget issues that are also WGF priorities. Feel free to use them or get more background on each of these issues and others at the link also posted above (in Section 2): www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments

- **Re-authorize the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program**
 - Extend the KKSP authorization for 10 years until 2032.

 - Increase funding to \$70 million per year, a total of \$700 million

- **Take Actions to Control PFAS**
 - Increase funding for testing by \$750,000. If we don’t know where PFAS are in the environment we cannot clean up or control PFAS

 - Increase DNR staff by 11 positions.

 - Add \$10 million for a municipal grant program to assist in PFAS cleanups.

The following report from *Opportunities Now 2021-2023 PFAS* contains many more talking points and recommendations:

<https://wigreenfire.org/pfas-forever-chemicals-in-wisconsin-wisconsins-green-fire-opportunities-now-2021-2023-report-pfas/>

- **Clean Water**

- Increase funding for county Land and Water staff statewide. These professionals are the experts working with farmers and landowners

- Increase the Target Runoff (TRM) program by \$6.5 million

- Increase the farmer's producer-led watershed grants program to \$1 million per year

- Allow Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to use general permits for hydrologic restoration projects. This will make water restoration projects easier and more effective.

- **Clean Energy**

- Add \$100 million more into the Focus on Energy program for business and residential energy conservation projects.

- Establish an Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy

- Add \$10 million in new funding from the Volkswagen (VW) settlement for the Electric Vehicle charging program throughout the state highway system

The following report from *Opportunities Now 2021-2023 The Future is Now— Creating a 21st Century Energy Policy* contains many more talking points and recommendations:

<https://wigreenfire.org/creating-a-21st-century-energy-policy/>

- **Climate change**

- Fund and create state and local climate risk assessments and resilience plans. The plans will identify infrastructure and communities most at risk of climate change impacts.

- Support the forestry proposals to combat climate change: additional money for the Urban Forestry Program, the Forest Landowners Grants and funds to combat invasive species

- **CWD**
 - Add \$1 million to fund drop off site for deer carcasses.

 - Add a new position at DNR for a wildlife veterinarian.
- **Waterfowl Stamp Increase**
 - Raise the current \$6.75 fee to \$11.75. The increase will be used for wildlife habitat work and rehabilitation.
- **Office of Environmental Justice**
 - Create an Office of Environmental Justice in the Department of Administration. The Office will facilitate collaboration across state agencies on environmental justice issues.

Here is the Green Fire Budget Issues paper with additional information on each of the above talking points:

<https://wigreenfire.org/2019/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Summary-of-Governors-Budget-Proposal-Items-2021-2023-FINAL.pdf>

If you have any questions feel free to contact:

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