
Wisconsin Legislative Council

AMENDMENT MEMO



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2019 Senate Bill 718

Senate Amendment 1

2019 SENATE BILL 718

2019 Senate Bill 718 appropriates \$1 million in fiscal year 2020-21 for a nitrogen optimization pilot program. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to award grants of up to \$50,000 to agricultural producers through the program. In conjunction with a grant to an agricultural producer, the bill authorizes DATCP to award up to 20 percent of the amount of the grant awarded to an agricultural producer to “eligible university entities” – namely the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison, the Center for Watershed Science and Education at UW-Stevens Point, and the UW-Extension.

Grants awarded to agricultural producers must be used to implement a project, for at least two growing seasons, that reduces nitrogen loading or uses nitrogen at an optimal rate while protecting water quality, including by reducing nitrogen application despite a decrease in crop yield, by growing a crop that requires less nitrogen or that is nitrogen fixing, or by expanding or conserving wetlands. An agricultural producer receiving a grant under the program must collaborate with the university entities to fit the needs of the academic research conducted by those entities.

SENATE AMENDMENT 1

Senate Amendment 1 clarifies that the entire grant to an agricultural producer and a university entity is limited to \$50,000 and that, of that amount, up to 20 percent may be awarded to the university entity.

BILL HISTORY

2019 Senate Bill 718 was recommended by the Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality and introduced by Senators Cowles and Petrowski. Senator Cowles offered Senate Amendment 1 on January 30, 2020. On February 11, 2020, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy voted to recommend adoption of the amendment and passage of the bill, as amended, both on votes of Ayes, 5; Noes, 0. On February 12, 2020, the Joint Committee on Finance likewise voted to recommend adoption of the amendment and passage of the bill, as amended, on votes of Ayes, 16; Noes, 0.

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