

Citizens Water Lobby Day Slated for Feb. 8

For the first time in history, Wisconsin grassroots groups and individuals are joining forces to advocate for citizen engagement in lobbying Madison for sound surface and groundwater protection.

Called Citizens' Water Lobby Day, six busloads plus other organizers will converge at the Capitol Wednesday, February 8 to demand responsible water policy from their elected officials.

"This is our chance to help build a statewide coalition, to speak with our lawmakers about our water issues, and to help influence how water legislation is determined," said Don Ystad, from the Concerned Rural Citizens' group, a co-organizer along with Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network.

Ystad said the idea for the Citizens' Water Lobby Day started with an anonymous donation of six charter buses to get Wisconsin citizens to Madison for a legislator contact day. The initiative has brought together grassroots groups and individuals who have come to the clean water fight through different avenues—concentrated agricultural farm operations (CAFOs), frac sand mining, pipelines, mines, high-capacity well, shoreland zoning and social justice.

"We intend to engage with our elected officials until we have absolute certainty that our water is protected from various forms of pollution," said Mary Dougherty, president of the Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network and regional consultant for the Socially Responsible Agriculture Project. "February 8th is just the beginning of our presence at the Capitol and we're hoping citizens across Wisconsin will stand with us."

Civic engagement is the central theme and legislative staff will kick off the day with a boot camp for participants -- providing tips for effective citizen interactions with their elected officials. Criste Greening, board member of the Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network, is encouraging citizens to contact their representative ahead of time to set up a meeting time that day. "Hearing voting constituent's personal stories in person is much more powerful than a random email sent on behalf of an organization," Greening said.

Citizens' Water Lobby Day will be held on Wednesday February 8th from 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM in room 412 East (Joint Finance Committee room) at the State Capitol in Madison. For more information, visit their event listing on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/events/240757196368636/) (<https://www.facebook.com/events/240757196368636/>).

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