



Wisconsin Insurance Alliance

To: Andy Franken, President
From: Kyle Neuser, Intern
Date: May 11, 2023
RE: Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant Program Bill

The Senate Housing, Rural Issues, and Forestry committee met on Thursday, May 11, 2023, for a hearing regarding SB-222.

The bill would require the Division of Emergency Management to create and administer a pre-disaster flood resilience grant program. If adopted, the division would allot grants to projects concerned with identifying and improving flood vulnerabilities through “local governmental units.” A city, village, town, county, regional planning commission, or federally recognized American Indian tribe or band qualifies as a local governmental unit in this context. Also, nonprofit organizations and private consulting organizations would be allowed to apply for a grant on behalf of one or more local governmental units.

Senator Quinn, the bill’s author, stressed how this bill will help Wisconsin become more preventative rather than reactionary in terms of its response to floods throughout the state. By building up areas that have been historically vulnerable to regular flooding, Senator Quinn believes such projects would eventually save the state money in the long run. Rather than regularly spending money on cleanup and disaster relief aid, this bill seeks to prevent floods from happening in the first place.

The division may provide up to \$300,000 per assessment grant and \$250,000 per implementation grant. The program grants may cover up to 75% of the total anticipated project cost and the applicant must provide where the remaining funding will come from. Furthermore, applicants must meet one of three criteria in order to receive funding: 1) the project area was the site of a presidentially declared disaster for flooding within 10 preceding years of the grant cycle 2) the project area was the site of a governor-declared state of emergency for flooding within the 10 preceding years of the grant cycle 3) the application is for a local governmental unit that has a division-approved hazard mitigation plan that identifies localized exposure to flood risk.

The bill has received bipartisan support in both houses and the nature of the entire hearing was optimistic and uncontentious. Wisconsin Trout Unlimited Inc., Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Audubon Great Lakes, and the Wisconsin Counties Association testified in favor of the bill, while no one testified against it.