



Published on *Wis.Community* (<https://www.wis.community>)

Home > Putting the people above the politics

Putting the people above the politics



Submitted by Steve Hanson on November 4, 2019 - 10:21pm



[1]

#222222;">Recent developments in Madison have threatened livestock siting rule changes, leaving our water and rural communities at risk.

Last Thursday, Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald threatened that legislators would deny the appointment of Brad Pfaff, secretary-designee of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Fitzgerald asked Gov. Evers to withdraw his nomination of Pfaff, who, like many cabinet members, has been awaiting Senate confirmation for nearly a year.

Hours later, Sec. Pfaff announced the DATCP board would not move forward with a Nov. 7th vote on updates to the state's Livestock Siting Rules, aka ATCP 51. This decision comes after citizens turned out across the state for hearings and proposed revisions to the rules, which safeguard Wisconsin's land, water and communities.

#####;">The law that gave rise to the ATCP 51 rules was originally adopted as a bipartisan compromise to strike a fair and balanced agreement between growth in Wisconsin agriculture and local governments' ability to mitigate risks associated with large livestock operations in their communities.

#####;">The mere hours between the two decisions hardly seems like a coincidence. Instead, it appears to be the result of pressure exerted by industry groups and another move in a gross political game that has left our government hamstrung and the interests of Wisconsin citizens ignored.

#####;">Hundreds of citizens participated in the ATCP 51 hearings, and those who testified #222222;">overwhelmingly supported updating the rules. Proposed revisions would hold large livestock operations accountable for damage to land, water, roads, and neighboring property values. The revisions would #222222;">impact only 1 percent of the state's very largest farms.

#####;">

#####;">To scrap the rules now is to ignore all the people who took the time to participate in the public process. #222222;">Wisconsin citizens also expect that when they take the time to participate in public hearings, their views will be respected and not ignored. Our public servants fell short of both of these expectations last Friday.

#####;">

#####;">The Livestock Siting rules have not been updated in over a decade, and in the face of increasing odor, noise, and traffic complaints and increasing permitting costs being shouldered by local governments, the updates are long overdue.

#####;">

#####;">Our legislators' attempts to use political maneuvering to shutter these revisions is disappointing, as is Pfaff's apparent willingness to capitulate in the face of opposition and a threat to his title.

#1d2129;">As Midwest Environmental Advocates noted in a recent post on social media, "The real losers in this political power struggle are the thousands and thousands of families whose quality of life steadily erodes as the industrial farming model tightens its grip on rural Wisconsin. Who is looking out for them?"

?

Among those being hurt by this industrial agriculture model are the hundreds of family farms we've lost each year, including 691 dairy herds in 2018 and 634 so far in 2019 (as of Oct 1).

The Senate is scheduled to vote on Pfaff's appointment tomorrow, Nov. 5th. It remains unclear whether ATCP 51, the Livestock Siting revisions, will move forward for a vote.

#222222;">Wisconsin Farmers Union encourages those displeased with this gridlock to contact Governor Tony Evers' office (608-266-1212) DATCP (608-224-5012) and your State Senator's office (find contact info at <http://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/> [2]). Urge them to tell Secretary-Designee Pfaff to put the vote on ATCP 51 back on this Thursday's DATCP Board agenda. If the DATCP board does not vote the rules forward on Thursday, all of the positive progress that we have made on these rules will be lost.

#ffffff;">

#ffffff;">It is not right to put the political appointment of one person ahead of the voices of hundreds of citizens. First and foremost, we need our public servants to serve the public interest. The gridlock of inactivity exhibited by both state and national representatives due to political squabbles is having a direct effect on the everyday lives of citizens. Enough of this game-playing ? it is time that our legislators stop impeding the democratic process and let the people speak.

Von Ruden is a Westby dairy farmer and president of Wisconsin Farmers Union, a grassroots organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for farmers, rural communities, and all people.

Groups audience:

Farming [3]

Open Atrium Section:

News

Tags:

livestock Citing [4]

News Article Type:

Opinion [5]

Author Credit:

Darin Van Ruden - Wisconsin Farmers Union [6]

Source URL: <https://www.wis.community/farming/news/putting-people-above-politics>

Links

[1] <https://www.wis.community/system/files/images/vonrudenfarm.jpg>

[2] <http://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/>

[3] <https://www.wis.community/farming>

[4] <https://www.wis.community/tags/livestock-citing>

[5] <https://www.wis.community/news-type/opinion>

[6] <http://wisconsinfarmersunion.com>