

CRANES

Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability

On behalf of its member organizations and individuals, advocating collaboratively for the environment of the South-Central Wisconsin region (eight counties: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk) toward a high quality of life; an ecologically sustainable and just culture; and, the celebration of the beauty of this place, both natural and built.

VISION

The Capital area's environment, including water, land, and air resources, will be conserved or restored to ensure the region's quality of life and the beauty of this special place, for all who live or visit here, now and in the future.

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League of Women Voters - Dane County
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Western Dane Coalition for Smart Growth & Environment
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April 20, 2017

MEMO TO: Commissioners, Dane County Lakes & Watershed
Commission

FROM: Gary Werner, President, CRANES

SUBJECT: Support for 2016 RES 469 "Healthy Farms, Healthy Lakes"
Task Force

Dear Commissioners

CRANES is pleased to support the creation of the Healthy Farms, Healthy Lakes Task Force by the Dane County Board. We applaud the County for addressing the on-going challenges of phosphorus runoff from urban and rural land uses and agricultural practices.

Over the last several years, the Lakes & Watershed Commission, the Environment, Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, and the Land Conservation Committee, the major conservation and environmental committees of the Dane County Board, have studied and discussed with researchers, county conservation staff and many stakeholders the broad range and complexity of issues that impact farming and lake water quality. Many of these efforts and past adopted policies and programs are recognized in the charge to the Task Force.

RES 469 recognizes many of the important stakeholders in the proposed membership of the Task Force. We urge the Task Force leaders to provide multiple opportunities for the broader public and other stakeholders to contribute to Task Force discussions as well.

Thank you for your consideration of this input.

Sincerely,



Gary Werner
President

Clean Lakes Alliance

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April 20, 2017

Re: Support of 2016 RES-649 to create a Dane County Healthy Farms, Healthy Lakes Task Force

Dear Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission Members:

Seven years ago, this community came together and formed an alliance to improve the condition of our lakes and beaches. Today, citizens, businesses, government agencies, scientists, policymakers, and farmers are working as one to advance effective and often innovative solutions, and are doing so by following a shared roadmap called the *Yahara CLEAN Strategic Action Plan for Phosphorus Reduction*. If the recommended urban and rural actions are fully realized, including farmland management actions that target 70% of the problem, scientists forecast more days when our lakes are clear and our beaches are open. As of today, we are 29% of the way toward achieving the annual phosphorus reduction goal, eliminating an estimated 3,400 tons of unwanted, lake-choking algae.

Building on this momentum, the Clean Lakes Alliance Community Board—a 40-member advisory body of leaders representing local businesses, nonprofits and government entities—unanimously adopted a 4-year strategic framework called *Plan 2020: A Clear Path Forward*, capping over a year of priority setting with the guidance of numerous partners and donors. At least two of our eight focus areas align with the objectives of the Healthy Farms, Healthy Lakes Task Force, including facilitating improved farmland management to reduce soil and phosphorus loss to the lakes, and to raise better public awareness of the issues and opportunities pertaining to improving watershed health.

We see the formation of a Healthy Farms, Healthy Lakes Task Force as an opportunity to initiate a public process to review the policies, practices, and economic realities that currently impact our farms and the quality of our lakes. It will help policymakers and cost-share providers make more informed decisions when it comes to supporting farmers in improving soil health. It offers an opportunity to take what we know and further our common desire to support a vibrant agricultural industry AND cleaner lakes, two things that are mutually reliant and not mutually exclusive. And finally, it supports Clean Lakes Alliance's mission to continue building a community of people, businesses, organizations, and government agencies dedicated to improving and protecting water quality in the Yahara River watershed.

In conclusion, we see this task force as a good-faith attempt to bring key partners and experts to the table to consider new research findings, to identify what's working and what's not, and to come up with recommendations for how we should move forward in a common-sense way that best protects our lakes and the livelihoods of our farmers.

Thank you for voting yes on this resolution.

In Partnership,

James Tye
Executive Director