

RESOLUTION

ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Land Conservation Committee and
Board of Health
INITIATED BY



1/3/2022
DATE DRAFTED

Establishing a County Program to Subsidize Groundwater Nitrate Testing and Mitigation for Residential Wells that Exceed Health Standards and Amending the 2022 Health Department Budget

WHEREAS, the level of nitrates in Rock County's groundwater has increased over the past two decades in private wells, with over an estimated 3,000 Rock County homeowner wells exceeding the state and federal drinking water nitrate health advisory level of 10 parts per million (ppm); and,

WHEREAS, in order to address the continued threat to public health of nitrates in Rock County's ground water, the Rock County Board of Supervisors created the Rock County Nitrate Workgroup by Resolution 17-SA-282 which was tasked with, among other things, evaluating nitrate sources and researching groundwater nitrate reduction initiatives being conducted in other parts of Wisconsin; and,

WHEREAS, The Rock County Board of Supervisors approved Resolution 21-7A-281, directing Staff to explore the feasibility of creating programs to address nitrate mitigation in Rock County's groundwater of creating and administrating programs to address excess nitrate levels in Rock County Groundwater including, but not limited to, implementation of a program to subsidize the cost of nitrate testing for ground water well users in Rock County, and a program to subsidize the cost of installation of reverse osmosis, or similar, water treatment systems that filter out groundwater nitrates to levels lower than federal maximums; and,

WHEREAS, Staff developed a comprehensive report and recommendation which was presented to the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup for consideration; and,

WHEREAS, the current cost for a water test is \$25.00 and the approximate cost of a reverse osmosis system is \$600 to \$1,200.00; and,

WHEREAS, it was determined that the intention of this program may be an eligible expenditure under the American Rescue Plan Act and that these funds would be utilized for this program; and,

WHEREAS, the Groundwater Nitrate Workgroup reviewed the report and recommendation developed by Staff and made the following program recommendation to for consideration by the County Board:

General eligibility shall be limited to 1-2 family dwellings that are owner occupied or rented; and,

The focus of the program shall be the highest risk populations and wells with the highest nitrate levels (greater than 15 ppm). If funding allows future consideration may be given to wells testing between 10-15 ppm; and,

Well testing shall be made available at no cost to households with pregnant individuals or infants less than one year old or with wells that previously tested over 15 ppm; and,

The testing option shall be advertised County wide through various outreach means, including, but not limited to, newspaper publications, notification to Towns and through the mailing list associated with owners of private septic systems; and,

Wells that test higher than 15 ppm shall be eligible for an additional test at no cost to the individual to confirm results; and,

Staff shall make an assessment of possible cause of high nitrate levels as part of the testing process and additional staff time associated with the assessments associated with this program may be reimbursed by the program funds; and,

Reverse osmosis, or similar, system shall be made available at no cost to households with pregnant individuals or infants less than one year old that test higher than 10 ppm or any well that tests higher than 15 ppm; and,

The users of wells that test higher than 25 ppm shall be advised that a Reverse Osmosis system may not be effective at reducing nitrate levels below the health advisory level. In situations with nitrates at 25 ppm or higher, there will be an evaluation process to determine if an RO system is feasible to treat water below the health advisory level. In some high nitrate situations RO may not be applicable and the need for a well replacement should be considered with full or partial replacement costs requiring additional County Board approval; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this 10th day of February, 2022, does by enactment of this Resolution approve a Groundwater Nitrate Testing and Mitigation Program as outlined above and authorizes funding not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for said program, which may be expended over multiple years; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Rock County Board of Supervisors, does by enactment of this Resolution authorize County Staff to develop program administration processes and procedures to carry out this program; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Rock County Board of Supervisors does by enactment of this Resolution amend the 2022 Health Department Budget as follows:

Account/Description Source of Funds	Budget 1/1/22	Increase (Decrease)	Amended Budget
19-1980-0000-42100 ARPA Funds	\$14,818,560	\$100,000	\$14,918,560
Use of Funds 19-1980-5151-64904 Program Expenses	-0-	\$100,000	\$100,000

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to secs. 59.01 and 59.51, Wis. Stats. As an amendment to the adopted 2022 County Budget, this Resolution requires a 2/3 vote of the entire membership of the County Board pursuant to sec. 65.90(5)(a), Wis. Stats.

Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution appropriates \$100,000 of the County's ARPA allocation for a Groundwater Nitrate Testing and Mitigation Program.

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

Administrative Note:

Per the Final Rule issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, these would be eligible expenditures under ARPA.

Josh Smith
County Administrator

Committee Action

Land Conservation Committee

The Land Conservation Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.

Board of Health

The Board of Health recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.