

Vilas 64-01-16

yes - 56
no - 15

64-01-16

Change in Funding for Stewardship Program

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is a mechanism by which the Natural Resources Board (NRB) can buy land in Wisconsin that will forever remain in public hands. The legislature oversees funding allocation on a biannual basis. This provides the NRB and the department money needed to purchase the land up to the allocated amount. **At the present time this program has accumulated \$930 million dollars in debt.** This type of debt cannot continue. The following states have found a better way to fund the same type of projects.

Missouri: Program is called "Wild Missouri" and is funded by 1/8 of 1% from sales tax revenue. That's 1 penny for every \$8.00 in items purchased in the state. The fund is due to bring in \$97 million dollars in 2016.

Minnesota: The "Legacy Fund" has been in operation since 2000 and is funded by 3/8 of 1% added to sales tax and has accounted for millions of dollars in cash revenue.

Michigan: "The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund". Funding is derived from royalties on the sale and lease of state-owned mineral rights.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at its April 11th 2016 spring hearing meetings recommend that the Conservation Congress work with the Department to find a way to change this fund from a Bonding Authority fund (borrowing fund) to a cash fund similar to what other states have been successful with.

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