

## CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Legislators

**FR:** Representative Jeff Mursau, Senator XXX

**DATE:** November xx, 2025

**RE:** Co-sponsorship of LRB- 2962/1 – funding for LEAF program and Wisconsin Forestry Center at the University of WI-Stevens Point and making an appropriation

**DEADLINE:** 5:00 PM on November XXX

Workforce recruitment and training are among the most urgent challenges facing Wisconsin's forest industry.

To address this, LEAF-Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program and the Wisconsin Forestry Center (WFC), both housed at the UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources, work together to strengthen forestry education and workforce needs across Wisconsin.

These programs are vital to Wisconsin's forestry education and training network, supporting the health and productivity of the state's forests and the long-term success of its \$27 billion forest industry. The proposed bill would provide an additional \$616,000 per year during the 2025–2027 fiscal biennium from the Forestry Account to help LEAF and the WFC continue and expand their critical contributions.

LEAF was created in 2001 to support Wisconsin K-12 teachers with the forestry knowledge, lessons, and skills to teach students about the state's forests and their sustainable management. Despite its critical role, LEAF's annual budget has remained at \$350,000 since 2011, with over 99% now devoted to staff salaries and minimal operational funding. The requested increase would stabilize personnel support and restore a position focused on high school forestry education and training.

The WFC, established in 2020, strengthens Wisconsin's forestry community through workforce recruitment and professional training, applied research, and outreach. Its flagship program, the Wisconsin Forestry Careers Coalition (WFCC) addresses the state's growing need for skilled forestry workers by creating high school curricula and immersive training programs in forest operations and mill technology. Over 90% of WFC's budget currently relies on grants and program revenue, making state support essential to sustain and expand these efforts.

If you are interested in co-sponsoring this legislation, please reply to this e-mail or contact **Representative Mursau's office at 9136 or Senator XX office at XXXX by XXX, 2025**. Co-sponsors will be added to both the Assembly and Senate versions of the proposal unless specified otherwise.