

Notice of Hearing

The Department of Natural Resources announces that it will hold a public hearing on an emergency rule to revise ch. NR 47 relating to the Federal funding for the Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program at the time and place shown below.

Hearing Information

Date: April 30, 2024

Time: 11 a.m.

Virtual Location Link: Online through [Teams](#) or by phone at 1-608-571-2209, phone conference ID 457 349 620#

Rule Information:

The department has been allocated \$4.875 million of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding from the USDA Forest Service (FS) to supplement the department's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Grant Program.

The emergency rule changes modified the current procedures, found in ch. NR 47, Wis. Adm. Code, for the administration of the department's UCF Grant Program awards to local governments, tribal governments, and not-for-profit organizations for the purpose of funding urban and community forestry projects as authorized under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 USC 2101 et seq.), as amended. The goal of these modifications is to facilitate the disbursement of new federal monies allocated under the IRA, and distinguish these IRA funds from state or other federal funds. Rule changes include introducing match waivers for grantees, establishing an advance payment of no more than 50% of the grant upon award to all grantees, allowing annual reimbursement for multi-year projects, increasing the maximum grant award amount to \$500,000, and specifying that only projects that benefit disadvantaged communities are eligible for these funds. These rule changes help facilitate equitable and efficient access to IRA funding through the department's UCF Grant Program.

Accessibility

For the hearing or visually impaired, non-English speakers, or those with other personal circumstances which might make communication at the meeting/hearing difficult, DNR will, to the maximum extent possible and with reasonable advance notice, provide aids including an interpreter, or a non-English, large-print, or recorded version of hearing documents. To access these resources, please contact the email address or phone number listed below as soon as possible.

Appearances at the Hearing and Submittal of Written Comments

The public has the opportunity to testify at the hearing. Registration will take place at the hearing by completing a Hearing Appearance form, which is available [here](#). Pre-registration is strongly encouraged if you plan to provide spoken comments during the hearing. To pre-register, please

download and complete the fillable [Hearing Appearance form](#) and send it to Laura.Buntrock@wisconsin.gov.

Comments on the emergency rule must be received on or before April 30, 2024. Written comments may be submitted by U.S. mail, E-mail, or through the internet and will have the same weight and effect as oral statements presented at the public hearing.

Written comments and any questions on the emergency rule should be submitted to:

Department of Natural Resources
Attn: Laura Buntrock
107 Sutliff Avenue,
Rhineland, WI 54501
Laura.Buntrock@wisconsin.gov
(608) 294-0253

The rule may be viewed at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/news/input/ProposedEmergency.html>

Comments can be made at: DNRAAdministrativeRulesComments@wisconsin.gov

The rule may be reviewed, and comments made at:
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/emergency_rules/active

Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis:

There are many anticipated positive economic impacts ranging from advancing environmental equity in Wisconsin communities, creating jobs, and supporting local businesses' and economies across Wisconsin. These grant funds will build green infrastructure, ensuring continued investment in urban forests throughout Wisconsin communities. Trees offer benefits to residents of communities of all sizes and locales, improving air quality and public health, reducing heat and heat illnesses, lowering utility bills, improving water quality and reducing flooding and stormwater runoff.

There are no negative economic impacts or costs to grantees associated with this rule, though there are ongoing maintenance costs associated with planting trees.

Agency Small Business Regulatory Coordinator:

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