

The Budget & Beyond: A Legislative Update

Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention
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Michael Engleson

Executive Director, Wisconsin Lakes
mengleson@wisconsinlakes.org



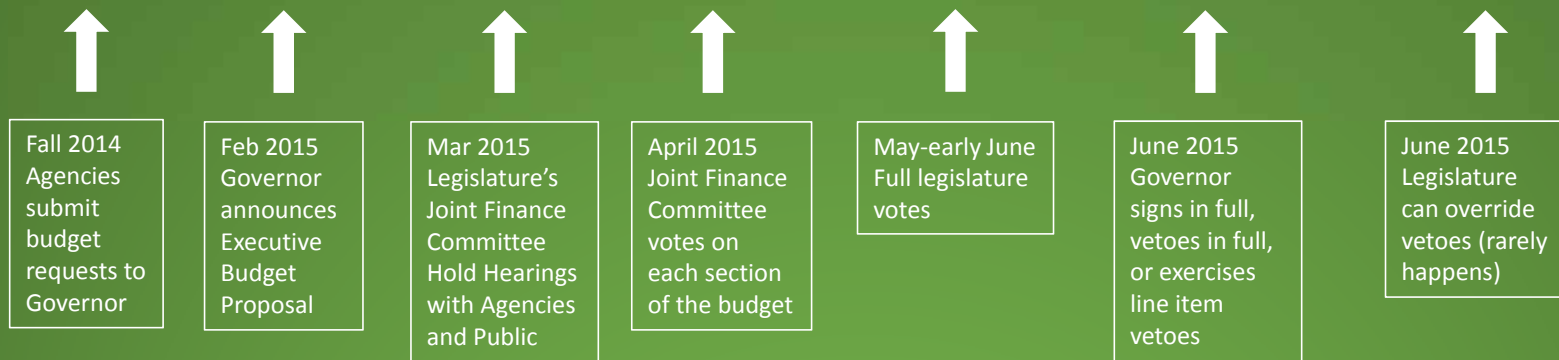
2015-16 Legislature

- Session began in January, runs for two years
- Assumptions going in:
 - Not a ton of huge natural resources initiatives
 - Big exception is groundwater quantity legislation
 - Given what we've seen, will this hold true?
- Early focus on the budget
- Some water related items also being considered
 - Microbeads, shoreland zoning correction, groundwater

The slide features a dark green background with a central white callout box containing a blurred image of the Wisconsin State Capitol building. The text is centered within the callout box.

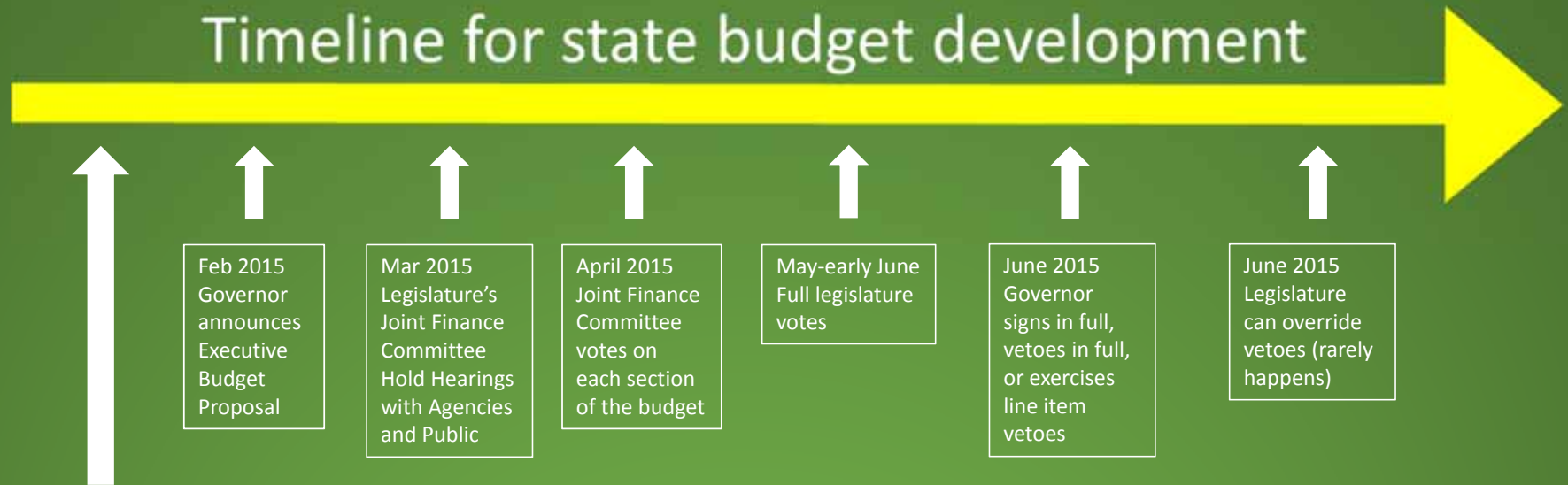
**2015-17
Wisconsin
State Budget**

Timeline for state budget development



- State budget is biennial – 2 years (July 2015-June 2017)

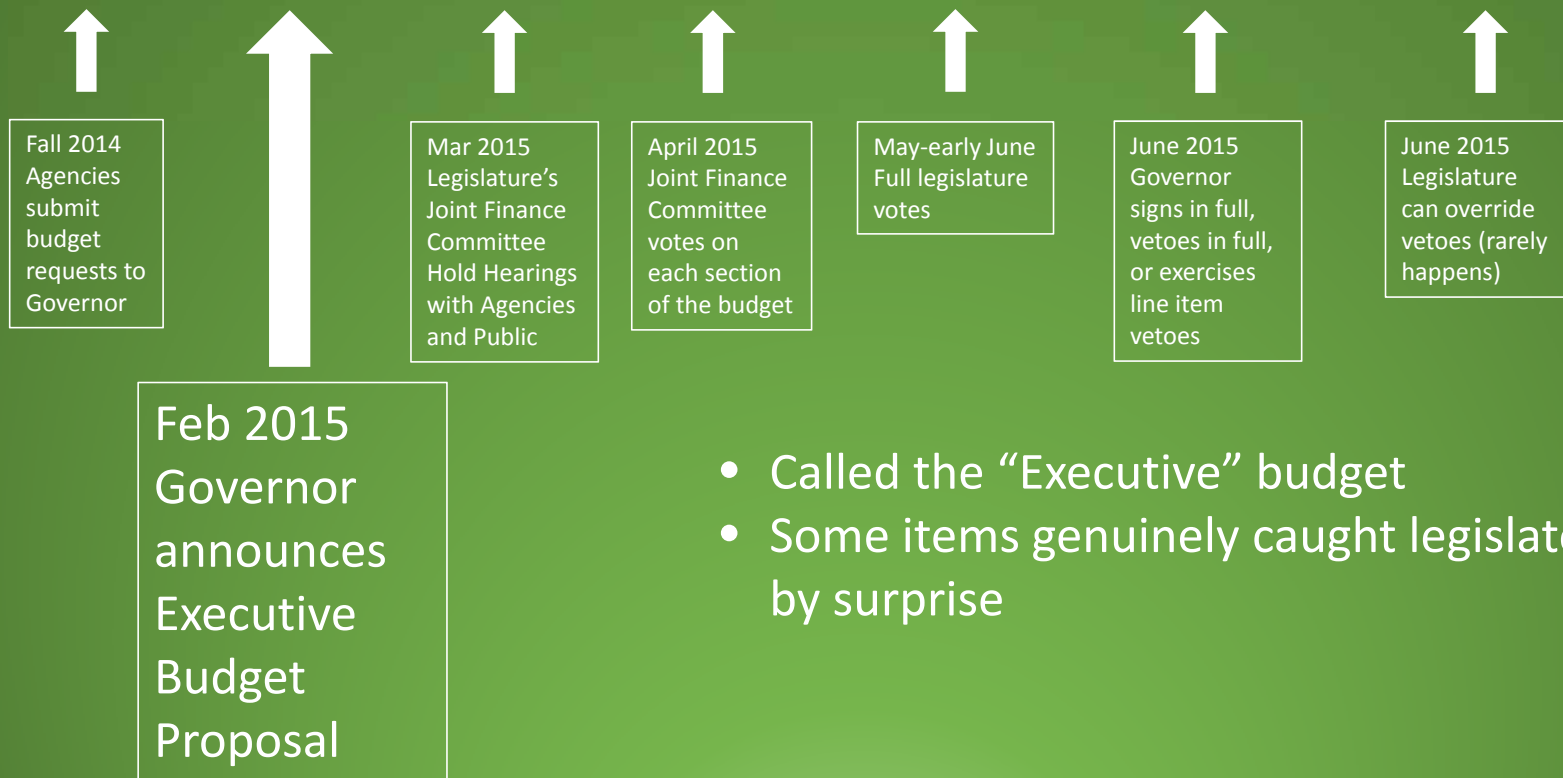
Timeline for state budget development



Fall 2014
Agencies
submit budget
requests to
Governor

- Agencies started work back in early 2014, submitted budgets to Governor's office in fall of 2014
 - This would indicate any changes in programs or needs for increased or decreased funding
 - DNR's submission made no changes from previous biennium

Timeline for state budget development



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Feb 2015
Governor
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Executive
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Proposal

↑
Mar 2015
Legislature's Joint
Finance Committee
Hold Hearings with
Agencies and Public

↑
April 2015
Joint Finance
Committee
votes on
each section
of the budget

↑
May-early June
Full legislature
votes

↑
June 2015
Governor
signs in full,
vetoes in full,
or exercises
line item
vetoes

↑
June 2015
Legislature
can override
vetoes (rarely
happens)

- Agency hearings allow legislators to ask questions of agency heads – can be more theater than informational
- 4 public hearings around state – day long affairs that have limited impact

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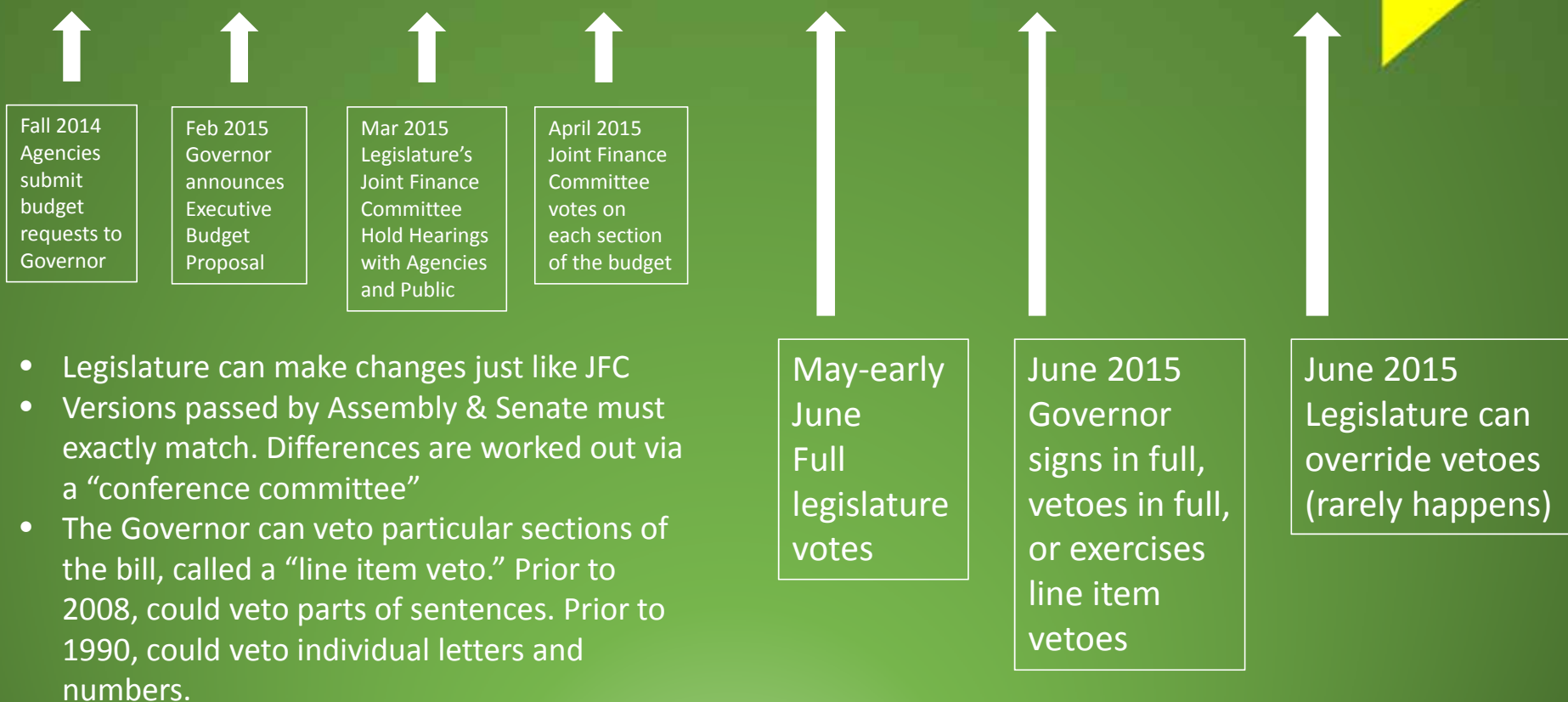
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- Where we are right now
- Takes place over several weeks
- JFC can add, delete, and change items

Timeline for state budget development



Water related items in the Governor's budget

- Convert the Natural Resources Board from policy-making to an advisory only body.
 - Removed by Joint Finance Committee, but likely will reappear as standalone legislation
- Impose a moratorium on land purchases under the Stewardship Fund until debt service on the bonds used for the purchases reaches a certain point – most estimates put that out to 2028.
 - The entire fund is only authorized to 2020, so could end land buys altogether
 - Popular program with municipalities, and even some businesses like forestry, and many conservatives
 - Probably will be changed, though not likely to be kept same as it is now

Water related items in the Governor's budget

- Cut nearly \$6 million dollars in funding for polluted runoff programs
 - Grants to farmers to implement best management practices, grants to municipalities to improve stormwater, staff positions with the counties
- Eliminate state funding to state park system & increase user fees
 - User fees unlikely to make up difference – has led to discussion of naming rights
 - Talk has been on major popular parks like Devil's Lake or Peninsula. What about small state forest campgrounds or less frequented parks?

Water related items in the Governor's budget

- Cut **positions** in the DNR's Science Services division
 - 18 positions to be cut (only 9 currently filled) – some federally funded
 - Agency has indicated it may disband division regardless of budget and move remaining scientists into divisions related to their research
- Governor Walker, commenting on cuts in Town of Grand Chute on Wed (Earth Day):

“We believe that science should drive decisions at the Dept. of Natural Resources but that we do it on an as needed basis so when an issue comes up that we need a report we can contract out for that.

- From Milw. Journal Sentinel's "All Politics" blog, April 23, 2015

Water related items in the Governor's budget

- Environmental Education
 - Eliminates the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board – provides grants to school districts and non-profits for environmental ed. Programs
 - Eliminates the Environmental Education consultant from Dept. of Public Instruction

Budget items directly related to partners in the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership

- Eliminates 13 “capacity grants” to various non-profit organizations
 - 2 of those to water groups that help citizens partner with DNR: Wisconsin Lakes (\$200,000) & the River Alliance of WI (\$75,000)
- Cuts \$800,000 in funding to County Conservationists
 - Same cuts were in the previous executive budget proposal in 2013
 - Legislature restored those cuts – some movement to restore them again, but funding is more difficult to find this time around because of cuts to other non-point programs
- Eliminated the Natural Resource or “Basin” Educators from UW-Extension
 - Work with regional groups and provide educational materials and presentations

Other natural resource items in the budget

- Forestry
- Land
- Energy
- Recycling

- *One good item!*
 - Ballast water fee collection
 - Originally set to end in December, the budget allows this program to continue.
 - Fee pays for 3 FTE DNR employees to monitor Great Lakes ship traffic for proper discharge of ballast water, a major method of introduction of aquatic invasive species



**Non-budgetary
policy items**

Groundwater

- LRB1446 – Gudex
 - Not yet introduced, sponsored by Sen. Gudex (R-Fond du Lac)
 - Would prevent DNR from requiring a new high-cap well permit when land is transferred in ownership or well is substantially repaired
 - Effectively creates a property right to the withdrawal because permits do not expire.
- AB105/SB72 – Miller-Mason
 - Sponsored by Sen. Miller (D-Monona) and Rep. Mason (D-Racine)
 - Comprehensive bill that provides DNR with authority to regulate withdrawals, including cumulative impacts
- Sen. Rob Cowles?

Shoreland Zoning

- AB165/SB113 – Town zoning in shorelands
 - Permits towns to zone in shorelands, so long as provision does not conflict with county shoreland zoning ordinance
 - Fixes problem of *Hegwood* court case, which ruled a town could not zone at all in a shoreland area covered by a county shoreland zoning ordinance, unless the town ordinance pre-dated the county ordinance
 - Towns still cannot enact zoning regarding matters covered by the shoreland ordinance
- AB154/SB104 – Town Zoning on Madeline Island
 - Sponsored by Sen. Bewley (D-Ashland) and Rep. Meyers (D-Bayfield)
 - Allows a town entirely on an island in Lake Superior to zone in shorelands more restrictively than a county ordinance

Shoreland Zoning

- Making the minimum standards the maximum
 - Bill being circulated by Sen. Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst)
 - According to the draft bill (language could change)
 - Counties would not be able to pass shoreland zoning standards stronger than the state standards in NR115
 - Because NR115 also sets the minimum standards, NR115 standards would become the shoreland zoning standards statewide
 - Current ordinances with standards beyond NR115 levels would be unenforceable
 - A county would not be able to require creation or expansion of a vegetative buffer, but could require maintenance of an existing buffer if it also
 - Requires a 35' viewing corridor for every 100' of shoreline
 - Private landowners could not write a covenant or place a restriction on their own deed requiring any form of shoreland management.

Polluted Runoff

- No new major legislation at this time
- Expect action to create the variance allowed under a bill passed into law in the last legislative session
 - If certain conditions exist, allows point source polluters to pay a fee to counties to be used for polluted runoff work
 - To go into effect, conditions required for variance need to be shown

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention & Control

- No legislation being discussed that we know of
- State is revising its AIS Prevention and Control strategic plan (WI Lakes & other Lakes Partnership groups are active in that process)
 - Plan may stir a call for legislation or new rule-making

Other Miscellaneous Items

- AB15/SB15 – Microbead Ban
 - Bans sale and production of personal care products with microbeads
 - Measure passed both houses with overwhelming bipartisan support, is expected to be signed by the Governor
- AB47 – Municipal appointments to Lake District Boards
 - Provides flexibility to the local government in a district to appoint a representative to the district's board of commissioners – no longer would have to be elected official
 - Solves “empty seat” problem of official not coming to district meetings
- No major rulemaking we know of at this time

What can I do to participate in the process and make a difference?

1. Come to my session tomorrow morning on just this topic! Same place, same time!
2. Contact, contact, contact.
3. Be polite, but get your point across.
4. Tell a story
5. Collaborate. Belong to groups that amplify your voice.
6. Keep informed.

How do I stay informed?

- Lake Policy Report (sign up at info@wisconsinlakes.org or www.wisconsinlakes.org)
- Policy pages at www.wisconsinlakes.org
- Other WI Lakes communications like the eLake Letter and the Lake Connection
- The legislature's website: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>
- The Wheeler Report: www.thewheelerreport.com
- Press sites from around the state
- Automatic Google searches

A nighttime photograph of a city skyline reflected in a body of water. The lights from the buildings are mirrored on the dark water surface. The sky is dark, and the overall scene is dimly lit with the primary light source being the city lights.

***Thank you for being interested
in public policy!***

Michael Engleson

Wisconsin Lakes Executive Director

mengleson@wisconsinlakes.org

(608) 661-4313

4513 Vernon Blvd, Ste 101

Madison, WI 53705