

# Proposal for Improved Coordination of Government Relations Activities

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## Background

While no major lobbying effort or extensive government relations initiative is under way or planned by the state RC&D association or any of its members at this time, from time to time individual RC&D member organizations sometimes identify and pursue opportunities to communicate with local, state or even federal officials on policy matters.

Because of the similarities in the mission, activities and public identity of RC&Ds, positions on such policy matters frequently align. This creates an opportunity to strengthen the impact of the government relations effort through a coordinated or concurrent messaging strategy.

## Recommendations

1. Government relations should be on the agenda of each quarterly meeting of the Wisconsin Association of RC&D. The purpose of such discussion would be:
  - a. Identify opportunities to consider at the member organization and state association level.
  - b. Create awareness of each RC&D's considerations/plans regarding upcoming governmental relations activities.
  - c. Determine if action should involve a single RC&D, a coordinated effort involving two or more RC&Ds, or a combined effort. In the case of coordinated or combined efforts, identify the individuals who will oversee the effort.
  - d. Review any government relations activities of the previous quarter.
2. Unless the urgency of a message precludes doing so, an RC&D that is planning to communicate with government officials on policy issues should advise the executive directors of the other RC&Ds at least one week before carrying out such action.
  - a. This will give the other RC&Ds an opportunity to join in on the effort if messaging can be made agreeable to all, consider a similar approach targeted to their own representatives, or at least have an awareness of what each other is doing.
  - b. Decision-making responsibility for potential follow-up rests with the executive director in conjunction with his/her RC&D's board president.
3. If time constraints prevent a local RC&D from advance sharing of a government relations action, such actions should be reported to the other members as soon as possible.
  - a. This will give the other RC&Ds an opportunity to consider similar communication targeted to their own representatives, or at least have an awareness of what others are doing.
  - b. Decision-making responsibility for this rests with the executive director in conjunction with his/her RC&D's board president.

## Final Note

Each individual RC&D is an independent organization, with needs that may be different from its peers. Therefore, it is important that each RC&D maintain its ability to make decisions independent from the state association or other member organizations. Nothing in these guidelines is intended to restrict that authority or autonomy.