



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, April 14, 2022

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Wisconsin Supreme Court Denies Meteor Timber Appeal in Wetlands Case

Federal Government Steps in Where State Lawmakers Fall Short on PFAS

A rare Wisconsin wetland will remain protected. Yesterday, the Wisconsin Supreme Court denied a petition from Atlanta-based Meteor Timber, LLC., to re-hear its wetlands case. The company had sought to destroy a hardwood wetland forest in Monroe County to build a frac-sand loading depot on the site.

"This is a permit that never should have been issued in the first place. This company's application to fill valuable wetlands did not meet the standards that every other business and individual must meet," says Clean Wisconsin staff attorney Evan Feinauer. "Meteor Timber obviously knew this, because it sought to have special legislation pushed through without notice or debate that would have exempted its project from the permitting process altogether. Fortunately, that effort failed. Permits to impact natural resources should only be issued when rigorous standards are met, and not because a business has powerful and well-connected lobbyists."

Meteor Timber did ultimately receive a DNR permit to fill in the wetland in 2017, prompting Clean Wisconsin and its partners to sue the agency. Last December, the Court of Appeals upheld a lower court decision to block the company's permit. That victory was the culmination of more than four years of legal work by Clean Wisconsin and Midwest Environmental Advocates, which represented the Ho-Chunk Nation. The appeals court upheld a 2020 ruling by Monroe County Circuit Court that determined the DNR violated state wetland protection laws when it issued the permit.

"This case is now over, but the struggle to protect Wisconsin's waters, including wetlands, is not," Feinauer says. "Clean Wisconsin will continue working to protect wetlands, rivers, lakes and streams by ensuring that DNR follows both the law and science when issuing permits. Every wetland we can protect is an enormous victory."

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On behalf of its more than 30,000 members, supporters and its coalition partners,
Clean Wisconsin protects and preserves Wisconsin's clean air, water and natural heritage.

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