



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 · MADISON, WI 53708

October 17, 2017

Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison WI 53702

Honorable Governor Walker,

We are thankful for the provision of the 2017-19 state budget which allocates nearly \$20 million in 'let' dollars for the beginning of the construction of the WIS 23 project between Plymouth and Fond du Lac. The construction of this highway is a top priority in our districts and it is a very frequent topic of constituent communications to our offices.

We write this letter to request your support for advancing a specific portion of the aforementioned project that is not slated for completion until, at the earliest, 2020 or 2021. We would like the westernmost portion of the WIS 23 project, which was previously enumerated and planned, connecting Fond du Lac to Plymouth advanced to the next construction season. Specifically, our request is for the construction of the County Hwy. K bridge and supporting structures which was slated to be the final section to be completed. Projections for completion of this specific portion will cause the current dangerous interim condition of the roadway to needlessly continue.

The recent report of the \$579 million surplus at the closure of the 2015-17 budget puts us in a position to move forward with this portion of the overall project and provide the safety that our constituents deserve for this long-anticipated, much-delayed project. We understand that the 2017-19 state budget is already planning to use an approximate \$130 million surplus from the 2015-17 budget for transportation projects and hope that this additional surplus should be used to expedite our transportation infrastructure. It is our understanding the Hwy K portion of the project is not at issue in the lawsuit that has caused the overall project delays. Therefore the Supplemental Environmental Impact statement that is required and being prepared by the WI DOT will not alter the Hwy K portion of the project. Furthermore, the Federal Appeals Court decision indicated that the State can use its own money to advance the project without the assistance of the federal dollars which are being held up by the courts.

As you know, the history of this project is lengthy. As a Connector in the State Highway Plan, WIS 23 warrants high levels of mobility and safety. Because of this, in the 1999 biennial budget, the legislature enumerated WIS 23 as a major project. Authorization for

expanding highway capacity along the portion of WIS 23 from WIS 67 to US 41 in Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Counties is found in Wis Stats 84.013(3)(ra). As you are aware, this project has already been needlessly delayed by a lawsuit and other factors for over 18 years. **Crashes on the entire stretch of Highway 23 have continued to increase greater than the state average. The Hwy. K portion of WIS 23 has the highest crash incident level on the entire highway.** Moving up this specific section will not only quicken the entire completion of the project but provide a safer intersection and alleviate one of the busiest areas of cross traffic on this stretch.

The Hwy K portion of this project is within the City of Fond du Lac and sits directly in front of a newly remodeled and expanded K-12 school, St. Mary's Springs Academy (SMSA). The construction of this school anticipated the safety features of the proposed project that have been delayed. Hundreds of vehicles, many of them driven by inexperienced high school drivers, twice daily use the current interim intersection. Fortunately, no accidents have yet occurred as a result of the current dangerous situation. We would like to give our constituents, particularly the families involved with SMSA, the comfort of knowing the construction of the Hwy K portion of the overall project will be taken up within the next year, and not prolong a dangerous situation until 2020 or 2021.

We look forward to working with you in any legislative ways to secure this segment on the enumerated projects for next summer.

Sincerely,



Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt
52nd Assembly District

Sen. Dan Feyen
18th Senate District

CC: Sec. Dave Ross
Majority Leader Fitzgerald
Speaker Vos

