



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

State Budget Update

April 17, 2015

As a member of the legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC), I am currently working to understand the specifics of each of the provisions contained in the Governor's proposed budget and their implications. Over the next couple of months the JFC will consider and take votes as to whether we will adopt, amend or delete the Governor's proposal and whether to include ideas proposed by individual legislators. A final budget is expected to be approved by the legislature by the end of June.

To date, the JFC has made the following adjustments to the budget:

- **Property Assessment Policy** – as a part of a wider sweep to remove non-fiscal policy from the budget, the JFC removed proposed changes to assessment for municipalities and counties. We will keep our property assessment policy untouched. (4/15/15)
- **DNR Board & DATCP Board** – two additional deleted non-fiscal policy items were changes to make the Natural Resources Board and the Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection into advisory committees. These provisions were removed. (4/15/15)
- **Railroad Safety** – provided funding for a Railroad Safety Inspector position for the Railroad Commission to ensure that railroads in our state are compliant and safe. I have seen the railroad traffic increase significantly and understand the importance of railroad inspections. (4/15/15)
- **Broadband Expansion** – tripled funding for Broadband Expansion Grants from the proposed \$500,000 per year to \$1.5 million annually over the next four years. These grants provide reimbursement for equipment and construction expenses incurred to extend or improve broadband telecommunications service in underserved areas of the state. (4/15/15)
- **Local Property Insurance Fund** – the Governors original proposal would end the program for local governments to get insurance from the state. Our motion delayed the elimination of this fund by 2 years so that local units of government will have time to figure out new plans. The current program is operating at a \$1.4 million deficit and has been mismanaged, which creates a large liability for the state. Regardless, premiums will go up an average of 45%, so this will give the local units of government the opportunity to shop around for the best price on insurance. (4/17/15)

I look forward to seeking common-sense budget ideas that will ensure quality government programs and services for all of our residents and taxpayers. As I continue to review the budget bill, I appreciate your input. For an Executive Summary of the budget, please visit:

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb/publications/budget/2015-17%20Budget/Pages/publications.aspx>

Stay Connected! To add your email address to my **Weekly E-Update** list, please send an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov or call 1-800-978-8008.