



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

State Budget Update

May 8, 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)
- **Anti-Fraud Support for Entitlement Programs** – added \$250,000 to assist county-level governments in implementing anti-fraud measures for entitlement programs such as FoodShare. These funds have a federal match. The impact is \$500,000 for the biennium to prevent, detect and counteract fraud in these programs. (4/17/15)
- **Fish & Wildlife Account** – Sen. Marklein supported a motion to require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to study and address the imbalances in the Fish & Wildlife account. This account, which is funded by fees attached to hunting and fishing licenses, is operating at a \$3.5 million deficit due to a declining number of hunters. (4/22/15)
- **Hunting & Fishing License Fees** – no changes were made. (4/22/15)
- **Vintage & Antique Tractors** – Sen. Marklein authored a motion to change the vehicle registration requirement to allow vintage and antique tractors to travel on state highways to participate in parades and tractor club events. The provision includes travel to and from these events. (4/22/15)

- **Lower Wisconsin State Riverway** – oversight of this organization was moved from the Department of Tourism to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) but the organization will maintain budget autonomy. (4/22/15)
- **Kickapoo Valley Reserve** – no changes were made. (4/22/15)
- **Military Commercial Drivers' License** – waived the fee for this license. (4/22/15)
- **Car-Deer Kills** – funding was maintained for the program to remove deer roadkill from Wisconsin roadways. However, the source of the funding was changed and the DNR is now required to report on the program's effectiveness and offer recommendations. (4/22/15)
- **Wisconsin Well Woman program** - added \$100,000 to the Wisconsin Well Woman Program which provides breast and cervical cancer screenings and diagnostic services to women aged 45 to 64 with little or no health care coverage. The program is available in all 72 counties and 11 tribes and reached 5,799 women in 2014. (5/5/15)
- **Rural Emergency Medical Education** – provide a \$40,000 grant for advanced life support training to doctors, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and paramedics who work in rural hospitals and clinics. In the past, this funding was given to the Comprehensive Advance Life Support (CALS) Rural Emergency Medical Education organization. (5/5/15)
- **Wisconsin Fund for Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (POWTS) Grants** – restored the Wisconsin Fund which provides grants to low-income residents for part of the costs of repairing and replacing failing septic systems. (5/5/15)
- **Sexual Assault Victims Servicing Funding (SAVS)** – added \$100,000 GPR to the Department of Justice in 2016-17 for grants under the sexual assault victims servicing grant program. (5/7/15)
- **Lafayette County Sheriff's Department** – added a grant for \$50,000 per year to enable the Lafayette County Sheriff's Department to hire an officer dedicated to drug law enforcement. (5/7/15)
- **Law Enforcement Officer-Involved Death Investigations** – added \$630,000 for 4 positions over the biennium to conduct office involved incidents. (5/7/15)
- **State Park Solvency** – I authored a motion for the state parks account that would improve the financial condition of the state park system. We also required the DNR to study ways for the state parks to increase revenue and manage resources for continued sustainability. (5/7/15)

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>

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