



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

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CONTACT: SENATOR MARKLEIN
(608) 266-0703

Productive First Day of Joint Finance Committee Action on State Budget
Broadband funding expanded and Railroad Safety Inspector position funded
14 non-fiscal policy items removed – including municipal assessment and advisory boards

MADISON— State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) announced several significant budget impacts for the 17th Senate District today after the legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (JFC) completed their first day of committee voting.

Fourteen non-fiscal policy items were removed from the budget including the proposed change to county, regional and city assessment and changes to the Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Natural Resources Board (DNR).

“I support taking these items out of the budget,” Marklein said. “If these policy changes are worth further discussion, they should be considered as stand-alone legislation. I heard from many residents of the 17th Senate District about these issues and I am pleased we were able to remove them from the budget discussion.”

In addition, Marklein supported the effort to fund a Railroad Safety Inspector position for the Railroad Commission to ensure that railroad crossings in our state are compliant and safe.

“In light of several recent railroad-related incidents related to the 17th Senate District, I strongly believe that we need to fund this position to protect the citizens of our state,” Marklein said. “The volume of the traffic on our railroads has grown exponentially. Companies are transporting all kinds of cargo, including oil and other materials. Inspecting railroad crossings is an important part of public safety.”

Legislators also voted to triple 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.

“Broadband is an important communication and education tool for rural residents,” Marklein said. “I support the expansion of these grants to assist underserved, rural areas to provide service to residents who do not have other reliable options for internet connection and communication. Broadband expansion is critical for economic development and jobs in our state.”

The Joint Finance Committee will continue to meet in Executive Session over the next several weeks to revise the Governor’s budget proposal before it is presented to the full legislature.

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