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Walker Administration Covers up Transportation Funding to Foxconn

LFB Memo highlights partisan, inaccurate letter from DOT to JFC members

MADISON, WI – Today, Senate Democratic Leader Senator Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse) and Assembly Democratic Leader Representative Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) released a memo from the state’s non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) detailing Foxconn’s effect on the State Highway Rehabilitation Program budget. The memo highlights a \$70 - \$90 million reduction in funding for other state highway projects in favor of Foxconn-related roads. LFB composed the memo after a letter sent to Democratic Joint Finance Committee members from the Department of Transportation on February 7th claimed that money for road projects related to Foxconn would come from let savings. The LFB memo shows this statement to be inaccurate.

“If it wasn’t clear by now, as long as Governor Walker is in office, our roads will never be fixed. The Governor has failed to address transportation funding for 7 years, and now he is prioritizing Foxconn over desperately needed road repairs all over the state,” said Rep. Hintz. “The Walker Administration can misrepresent the numbers and pretend they’re somehow magically able to do more with less, but the reality is we are underfunding the State Highway Rehabilitation Program by \$800 million per biennium. Instead of admitting our funding shortfalls and working to fix this problem, the Governor had his DOT bureaucrats hastily throw together a letter full of campaign talking points. At the end of the day, the Walker Administration is giving more money to Foxconn and less money for our local roads.”

The LFB memo also discusses state highway conditions stating, “Over a 10-year period, the biennial funding level recommended by the Governor... with no inflationary increases, would result in a decline in highways rated at fair and above.” This calculation does not account for the funding now being shifted to Foxconn, meaning that our road conditions will be even worse than projected over the next 10 years because of this decision. It should also be noted that nothing in the state budget precipitated this funding being moved to Foxconn, nor did it receive any legislative approval or public input.

“Wisconsin residents should be outraged that up to \$90 million in funding designated for state highway projects is being diverted towards Foxconn,” said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling. “While potholes and crumbling roads and bridges continue to plague our local communities, Foxconn reaps the benefit from the largest taxpayer handout to a foreign corporation in U.S history. The Walker administration and legislative Republicans need to wake up and realize they created this transportation mess and they can no longer hide from it.”