



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

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Contact: Rep. Considine, (608) 266-7746

Rep. Shelton, (608) 266-0616

Rep. Snodgrass, (608) 266-3070

Democratic Transportation Committee Members Statements on Republican Bills to Control American Rescue Plan Act Funding

Yesterday, the Assembly Committee on Transportation met for a hearing regarding AB 238, relating to local road improvements. The hearing, as well as today's Executive Session, was noticed just before 5:00 p.m. on Good Friday. AB 238 is part of a package of bills rushed through by the Republicans to attempt to control funds for the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021.

Democrats agree that local roads are in need of funding and support the Governor's Budget allocations for \$15 million to address county road funding challenges. However, the issue of properly funding local roads is nothing new. Furthermore, the Republican majority spent 8 months without holding sessions or hearings related to helping solve these local road funding issues.

It is irresponsible to prematurely pass binding legislation on how to spend the ARPA funds regarding local road improvements before receiving a fiscal estimate or guidance from the U.S. Treasury. Furthermore, doing so could potentially put Wisconsin in a difficult position in which legislators may have to revoke these funds if they are allocated outside of the allowed federal scope.

Democratic members of the Transportation Committee released the following statements:

"My Republican colleagues dropped the ball last year," said Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo). "They refused to help Wisconsin residents if it meant working with Governor Evers and legislative Democrats. Luckily we have a governor who continually exercised leadership while working with his cabinet members and stakeholder groups. Governor Evers helped Wisconsinites through these difficult times by administering grants for rental assistance, broadband, small businesses, local governments, and more," the ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Transportation continued. "Now that at last we are seeing the possibility of recovery, my colleagues want to control how the funds get spent through their 12-4 Joint Finance majority. The federal government gave that responsibility to Governor Evers, he has a proven track record of administering relief, and we need to let him do his job."

"Investment in Wisconsin's infrastructure, including roads, highways and bridges, is critical for the future of our state. Republicans had eight years to maintain and improve our roads, and they didn't. Instead of



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trying to once again divide us with another power grab of state-issued American Rescue Plan funds, my Republican colleagues should be working with legislative Democrats and Governor Evers' office to identify funding amounts for key project areas and to streamline the process to ensure funding is distributed as quickly and as equitably as possible," said Representative Shelton (D-Green Bay).

"Sadly, this bill and the other 11 being rushed through committee are examples of political gamesmanship, not governing. A similar bill removing the Governor's purview over investing these funds was vetoed last week and this is more of the same. Instead of wasting taxpayer money trying to pass bills they know the Governor will veto, Republicans should have been working with Democrats all last session and this session to find bipartisan solutions to these problems. Not one Republican office reached out to mine to have a genuine solutions based conversation about road funding or anything for that matter. Rather than attempting to make Democrats or the Governor look bad, I wish time and energy was spent trying to build the relationships and trust necessary to truly govern and help the people of WI together," said Representative Snodgrass (D-Appleton).

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