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## **SEN. JACQUE: EVERS ADMINISTRATION BUILDING BAIT AND SWITCH IS A BREACH OF PUBLIC TRUST**

*Bloated estimates should not result in a \$70 Million windfall for the UW System, NE WI lawmaker says*

**MADISON...** State Senator André Jacque released the following statement regarding his vote today against giving an additional \$70 million for the UW System in concert with the over-estimating of project bids:

**“I am deeply concerned about the Governor’s omnibus UW spending proposal before the Building Commission today, and am pleased that my Republican colleagues on the commission joined me in rejecting it.**

**I am floored that bids for the UW-Eau Claire project came back more than \$70 Million-more than 20%- below what was expected all the way back in March of this year and we didn’t hear a peep about it from DOA until last week. Apparently DOA and the UW have been working for months on plans to re-spend the money, but no one in the legislature was consulted until now. Many of my colleagues expressed alarm about this earlier this week as well. And I’m even more stunned that we are now immediately being asked to spend all of this cash right away on a Christmas tree of items without that discussion with the legislature that appropriated the funds in the first place, in order to keep that money from potentially being saved up or returned to the taxpayers. The adage about not leaving money lying around the Capitol or politicians will spend it is certainly well-earned, and passing this motion today would only have added to that reputation.**

**I asked Fiscal Bureau, Building Commission staff, and the UW each to provide me with a list of projects that had been bid under expected cost to that extent by either percentage or total amount. The four projects that came back were all the result of substantial re-scoping downward because the project would have been over the allocation, and then adding back items to the project after the bids came back. I am alarmed that approving this item could establish a precedent and an incentive for pre-bid estimates to come in higher to create cash piñatas for other agency projects.**

**I am also extremely troubled that DOA is telling us that the UW System already exceeded its All Agency SEG REV allocation for the Small Project Program less than a year into the biennium and is asking for an additional influx of funds to increase to a level two and two-thirds times what has already been spent. This not only raises concerns about how carefully projects are being screened and prioritized, but brings into question the System’s preparedness for unexpected catastrophic failures like when the large slab of concrete fell at Van Hise Hall. Then, there were funds held in reserve in the UW small projects allocation to pay for the repair work begun under the Governor’s emergency authorization. Now, apparently, if a similar situation occurs the repairs can’t even begin because there are no funds in the underlying account.**

**I am alarmed that the very first sentence of an article in the Wisconsin State Journal this past weekend states that “UW-Madison is adding a business partnership floor to its upcoming engineering building”. Really? When did that get approved? What need is there for the Building Commission to even meet if the expectation is there for a rubber stamp whenever requested? The \$43.4 M in proposed additional gifts and grants, on top of those that have not even been committed yet for the underlying project, do not yet exist, and the more money that taxpayers give to the project, the less pressure there is for increased industry support or for those planning the project to sharpen their pencils.”**

*Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie Counties.*

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