



JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

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Governor Signs Five More Petrowski Bills Into Law

Madison...Governor Tony Evers signed nineteen bills into law today that were recently sent to him by the state legislature, including five bills authored by Senator Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon). The Petrowski bills focused primarily on public safety, transportation, and local government -- and all had passed both the Senate and the Assembly with unanimous, bipartisan votes.

The five Senator Petrowski bills include:

Senate Bill 506 (now Act 164) - This bill would grant local authorities the ability to post a lower speed limit for ATV and UTV traffic on designated roadway routes. This is a common sense change that will give local governments more flexibility to ensure the safety of both ATV/UTV riders and the general public on local roads.

“Allowing ATVs to run on local roadways is extremely important in helping to connect separate sections of recreational trails and allow for convenient access to fuel, lodging, and dining within our municipalities,” said Senator Petrowski. “In general, ATV traffic along the route is subject to the same posted speed limit applicable to regular vehicular traffic on the roadway. However, many local governments have expressed interest in posting a lower speed limit that applies only to ATV/UTV traffic. This new law allows the individual municipality to set its own speed limits for ATVs on their roadways.”

Senate Bill 625 (now Act 171) - Under current law, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) may issue permits for oversize/overweight vehicles transporting forest products within 11 miles of the Wisconsin-Michigan state line. The permit applies only to specifically designated highways -- and only if the vehicle does not violate length or weight limitations under Michigan regulations. This new law adds certain highway routes to the Michigan border permit that better serve the forestry industry while protecting our roadways from damage in northern Wisconsin.

“The forest products industry in Wisconsin is a critically important part of our state’s economy, providing more than 64,000 jobs with a total industry output of more than \$24.5 billion each year,” said Senator Petrowski.

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“Over the last decade, we have incrementally added logging truck routes along the Wisconsin and Michigan border, which offer greater efficiency for the industry by carrying larger loads while mitigating impacts to road surfaces through use of additional axles. We worked closely with the DOT to ensure that these new routes could handle the additional weight from logging trucks without doing damage to our roadways, culverts, or bridges.”

Senate Bill 640 (now Act 172) - This law requires that a person applying for a certificate of title for a motor vehicle of a model year 2011 or later that is less than 20 years old must include a disclosure of the vehicle’s mileage, doubling the requirement from the current 10 year look back. This bill was necessary to bring Wisconsin into compliance with federal regulations, which now require mileage disclosures on all titles being transferred for vehicles 20 years old or newer.

“The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that more than 450,000 vehicles are sold each year with false odometer readings, which costs American car buyers more than \$1 billion annually,” said Senator Petrowski. “By extending this requirement to report odometer readings for more vehicles, we can help to identify and deter fraud on Wisconsin consumers.”

Assembly Bill 481 (now Act 178) - This creates a new license plate embossed with the word “Fleet” across the bottom. Companies that have 10 or more automobiles or trucks less than 8,000 pounds may register all of the vehicles together as a fleet using this new plate. While the registration of the fleet would have to be renewed annually, these new “Fleet” plates would be exempt from the sticker requirement on each individual plate.

The creation of the plate would be funded by an initial \$8.50 fee for each vehicle registered in the fleet to cover the cost of the reissuance of this new plate. In addition, the regular registration fee would apply to each vehicle in the fleet each year.

“The current registration system in Wisconsin is incredibly cumbersome for companies with large vehicle fleets, particularly those with rental cars who purchase and sell vehicles on a rolling basis -- or those whose cars may be in several different locations in any given week,” said Senator Petrowski. “For these companies, tracking when the new registrations are due and trying to have the stickers in the same place as the car can be extremely burdensome. This will help simplify the process for both the companies and the Department of Transportation.”

Senate Bill 396 (now Act 162) – Modifies the interest rate a taxing district pays to a taxpayer who files a successful claim to recover unlawful property taxes. The current rate of 0.8% per month will be changed to the average annual rate determined by the most recent six-month Treasury bill auction. This action will match the interest rate applied when a taxpayer successfully challenges an excessive property assessment.

“This new law will save money for municipal taxpayers and make the process for repayment of excess property tax more uniform,” said Senator Petrowski. “It also makes the treatment of taxing jurisdictions more uniform, rather than leaving all the burden on the municipality.”