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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Joint Finance Committee Action on State Budget**

*Committee addresses Fish & Wildlife Fund, Car Deer Kills, Lower WI State Riverway, Kickapoo Valley Reserve, Military Commercial Drivers Licenses and Vintage Tractors*

**MADISON**— State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) announced several recent state budget changes made by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) during the last week of deliberation and Executive Sessions.

The JFC, on which Sen. Marklein serves, met on Friday, April 17, 2015 and today, Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

The following actions were taken:

- **Local Property Insurance Fund** – the Governor’s original proposal would end the program for local governments to get insurance from the state. Our motion delayed the elimination of this fund by 2 years so that local units of government will have time to figure out new plans. The current program is operating at a \$1.4 million deficit and has been mismanaged, which creates a large liability for the state. Regardless, premiums will go up an average of 45%, so this will give the local units of government the opportunity to shop around for the best price on insurance. (4/17/15)
- **Anti-Fraud Support for Entitlement Programs** – Added \$250,000 to assist county-level governments in implementing anti-fraud measures for entitlement programs such as FoodShare. (4/17/15)
- **Fish & Wildlife Account** – Sen. Marklein supported a motion to require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to study and address the imbalances in the Fish & Wildlife account. This account, which is funded by fees attached to hunting and fishing licenses, is operating at a \$3.5 million deficit due to a declining number of hunters. (4/22/15)
- **Hunting & Fishing License Fees** – no changes were made. (4/22/15)
- **Vintage & Antique Tractors** – Sen. Marklein authored a motion to change the vehicle registration requirement to allow vintage and antique tractors to travel on state highways to participate in parades and tractor club events. The provision includes travel to and from these events. (4/22/15)
- **Lower Wisconsin State Riverway** – Oversight of this organization was moved from the Department of Tourism to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) but the organization will maintain budget autonomy. (4/22/15)
- **Kickapoo Valley Reserve** – No changes were made. (4/22/15)
- **Military Commercial Drivers’ License** – waived the fee for this license. (4/22/15)
- **Car-Deer Kills** – funding was maintained for the program to remove deer roadkill from Wisconsin roadways. However, the source of the funding was changed and the DNR is

now required to report on the program's effectiveness and offer recommendations.  
(4/22/15)

Senator Marklein offered the following comments on several of the actions taken:

**Local Property Insurance Fund**

“Many local municipalities and school districts contacted me to share their concerns with making such a significant change that would impact their budgets without much notice,” Marklein said. “Over the next two years, these governments will be able to take the time to evaluate their next steps and make an informed decision on new plans.”

**Anti-Fraud Support for Entitlement Programs**

“I support providing funding to our counties to detect and counter-act fraud in entitlement programs,” Marklein said. “These funds are meant to help people and fraud directly impacts our resources to provide for those who actually need assistance in our state.”

**Fish & Wildlife Account**

“Hunters and fishermen in our state contribute to the fish and wildlife account with the intention that these funds are used for responsible conservation efforts,” Marklein said. “Operating this fund at such a significant deficit is irresponsible and we must address it moving forward.”

**Vintage & Antique Tractors**

“Residents in the 17<sup>th</sup> District, and throughout Wisconsin, who own vintage tractors should have the opportunity to share this important part of our state's farming history with our communities,” Marklein said.

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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