



For Immediate Release
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As Governor Announces Specific Vetoes, Counties Call for Much Larger Discussion on Tax Structure and the Future of Wisconsin

With Governor Doyle announcing his budget adjustment bill vetoes this morning, several which impact counties, the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) wants to work with state officials to look ahead and engage in a much larger discussion about the economic future of Wisconsin.

Vetoes announced today included the removal of a property tax exemption on low income housing.

“We don’t believe a particular property tax exemption, meritorious or not, should be the issue being discussed today,” said WCA Executive Director Mark D. O’Connell. “Instead of looking at one specific exemption that was placed into a budget adjustment bill, we should be having a much larger and separate conversation on the overall tax structure of Wisconsin and how this will position our state in the future.”

On the transportation front, it also was announced that quarterly payments of county transportation aids that total \$100 million annually will now be delayed. The second quarter payment of \$25 million will be paid instead in the third quarter, along with the third quarter’s \$25 million, totaling \$50 million.

“Obviously, we would have preferred to have each payment on time,” said O’Connell. “Because of the economic state we are in, things are being moved and adjusted, which has a real impact on every corner of our state.”

One highlight of the budget adjustment bill was an additional \$25 million championed by Representative Jim Kreuser (D-Kenosha) for much needed state highway maintenance projects. “Putting dollars into the maintenance of our transportation infrastructure demonstrates long-range vision by Representative Kreuser and we are grateful for his efforts,” said O’Connell.

O’Connell stressed the bigger issues that should be looked at are not individual vetoes on specific topics, but rather, the true causes of Wisconsin’s ongoing economic woes.

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“The very fact we are having a budget adjustment bill is a symptom of a much larger structural problem. This should force a frank discussion on where our state is headed. It’s the very reason why “The Wisconsin Way,” a discussion of Wisconsin’s future, has such widespread support across our state,” said O’Connell.

“If we are to succeed in the future, we must have a vibrant economy and focus our efforts on creating an educated population, creating industries that support families and generating a higher per-capita personal income,” he continued. “Until this is debated in the halls of the Capitol and in every community in our state, Wisconsin will continue to see significant fiscal challenges, ongoing budget problems and a less-than-robust economy.”

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