



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR
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SENATOR – 3RD DISTRICT

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5-County Tax Freedom Day

(MADISON)—Today, Senator Tim Carpenter issued the following statement regarding the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District’s Board meeting today, at which they have indicated that they will certify the end of the 5-county sales and use tax:

“Today is the day that the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District (the District) will finally certify an end to the Miller Park Tax.

“In 1995, the Wisconsin Legislature convened in a special session and ultimately passed a deal to build Miller Park, funded by a 0.1% sales and use tax across 5 counties: Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Washington, and Waukesha.

“In March of 2002, the District’s governing board indicated that the sales and use tax could be sunsetted in 2014. Later that year, the Legislative Audit Bureau conducted a review of the Milwaukee Brewers Stadium Costs, which brought concerns about the financing schedule to the attention of the Legislature. In its response, included with the audit report, the District reaffirmed its commitment to a 2014 sunset date.

“After this is when I began my attempts to codify a sunset for the Miller Park Tax. In 2003, I offered an amendment to sunset the tax by December 31st of 2014. For the following 16 years, I and my colleagues in the Senate and Assembly made several attempts to establish a predictable ending to the tax, all proved unsuccessful despite the fact that the District had made its intentions to end the tax in 2014 clear. Finally, after the District made the suggestion that they were ready to certify the end of the tax during 2020, a bill that would sunset this tax began to look like it would be able to pass the legislature.

“Even at this point, despite the desire of Legislators from the 5-county region, the bill was amended to give the District an extremely generous grace period to finish collecting the tax. I had produced a bill that would responsibly use any excess taxes and reinvest those funds back into the communities of the five counties. After learning about the grace period that my Republican colleagues found to be appropriate, I offered amendments that would draw back the grace period and end the tax on this day, March 10, 2020, *like the district had said it was prepared to do*. Other amendments that I proposed to the bill were ultimately killed, like one that would have guaranteed an audit of the District’s finances would be performed so that the people of Wisconsin could determine for themselves how satisfied they are with the management of the stadium.

“Some in the community have recommended continuing the sales and use tax, and putting those funds toward other projects that our state government has been neglecting, such as the sorry state of local roads, or other city and county projects and departments that are struggling to find funding. I agree that these priorities need to be addressed, but I do not think that continuing this tax would be an appropriate mechanism to achieve those goals.

“I look forward to attending the board meetings of the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District today, to watch as they take this major step to certify an end to the 5-county Sales and Use Tax. Finally!”

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