



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **WPT MEMBERS STRONGLY OPPOSE SEIZING PRIVATE LAND FOR BIKE PATHS**

MADISON – After conducting its Weekly Member Poll earlier this week, Wisconsin Property Taxpayers, Inc. issued the following statement regarding a budget proposal to reinstate the use of eminent domain to seize land from private property owners for bike and pedestrian paths.

“More than 85% of our members oppose this plan. If local governments have tens of thousands of dollars laying around for ‘design plans’ for bike paths, then they surely have enough money to offer a private property owner a fair market price to acquire the land,” John Jacobson, WPT member and government relations director said. “This is just another example of government ‘knowing’ what’s best, and having no problem infringing on private property rights. If you want a bike path, use the existing process instead of a ‘tax and seize’ approach.”

In the 2017-2019 budget, Representative Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond) advocated for and achieved a prohibition on the use of eminent domain for this purpose.

“Private property rights should not be taken away so that the recreational opportunity of others can happen on privately owned land,” Rep. Stafsholt said. “I am in favor of bike paths and recreational trails in their existing ability to be put in road right of ways, or acquired through land purchases from willing sellers. As we plan future developments, I expect to see these kinds of trails established as part of the current design planning process.”

WPT looks forward to working with Representative Stafsholt’s office and JFC members in opposing the reinstatement of this blatant overreach.

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