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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 16, 2019

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Excess from the Miller Park Tax Should Be Returned to the 5 Counties

(MADISON)—Today, Senator Tim Carpenter announced that he is introducing legislation to require that any excess proceeds collected from the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District Sales and Use Tax be returned to the five counties according to the proportion that they have paid in.

“In 1995, when the deal was made asking the citizens of Milwaukee, Racine, Washington, Ozaukee, and Waukesha counties to pay a sales tax that would be used to finance the construction of Miller Park, lawmakers were assured by the DOA Secretary that the sales tax would end in 2014. The good people of Southeastern Wisconsin have now been paying that tax 5 years longer than was originally promised, but finally there is an end in sight. The District has stated that barring any significant shift in economic conditions, they will be ready to officially sunset the tax at their March 2020 meeting.

“Since 2003, when the writing on the wall began to suggest that the sales tax would likely extend beyond the date that we in the Legislature had been assured of, I have been proposing bills and amendments that would put this promise in statute and guarantee an end to this tax.

“Currently, projections that have been made about the process for sunseting the sales tax estimate that there may be \$16,000,000 collected in excess of the revenue needed to meet the state’s obligations to the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District. Given the public’s substantial financial support in Miller Park’s construction, I believe it is only right to return any additional proceeds collected in the sunseting process to the counties that have made those payments.

“In 2015 a similar situation occurred in Brown County, when it became clear that the Professional Football Stadium District would be able to sunset the sales tax used for the construction of Lambeau Field, Governor Walker signed into law a plan that would reallocate any additional revenue to Brown County and its municipalities. I am asking here that the 5 counties be offered the same deal.”

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