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## **Representative Krug Applauds Senate Passage of the Mill Bill**

### ***Legislation provides state assistance towards the purchase of paper mills in Wisconsin Rapids and Park Falls***

**MADISON** – On Wednesday, the State Senate concurred on Assembly Bill 367 companion to Senate Bill 369. This legislation will now go to Governor Evers’ desk to be signed into law. The Mill Bill provides state assistance in facilitating the purchase of the former Verso Paper Mill in Wisconsin Rapids and the Park Falls Pulp and Paper Mill in Park Falls, Wisconsin. ([Link to Assembly vote](#), [Link to Senate vote](#)).

Representative Krug expressed his hope that Governor Evers would sign the bill. “This bill did meet with some opposition,” Krug noted, “Some in the legislature have asserted that this proposal may be a non-allowable use of federal stimulus money. However, none of our critics can point to anything in writing. I call on Governor Evers to sign this bill and give our proposal a chance to do good for Wisconsin.”

Representative Krug is asking supporters of the bill to email Governor Evers and ask that he sign the bill into law. A website has been set up to assist with this. Krug notes that “Anyone in Wisconsin can write Governor Evers to support this bill.” Please visit <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/rapidstogether/contact-the-governor/> to voice your support.

The re-opening of these mills will help continue moving these communities and the state of Wisconsin forward. The loss of these mills has affected families in both communities, as well as the timber industry and forestry management across the state. Prior to its closure, the Wisconsin Rapids mill alone consumed approximately 25% of all the pulpwood harvested in Wisconsin.

“I grew up with the mill as the heart of Wisconsin Rapids,” said Rep. Krug. “The mill in Wisconsin Rapids employed 900 people in a city of 18,000. Family members and lifelong friends have been part of the team at the mill for as long as I can remember.”

The positive effects of the re-opening of these mills will be felt throughout the state. From our neighbors and family in Wisconsin Rapids and Park Falls that will be employed at the mills, to the timber industry in the north and forest management, this is critical for Wisconsin. The Wisconsin County Forests association had estimated that if these mills had been shut down it would have had an impact of over \$4 million annually in lost revenue from sales out of county forests.

“We need the mill back up and running for our paper and timber industries, and also for our forests,” Representative Krug said. “Timber cutters will be able to sell the wood they cut, and timberland owners will be able to trim and cull forests in accordance to management plans. Some of the landowners are participating in the Managed Forest Land Program, and this legislation will allow them to continue to maintain our forests.” Representative Krug added that “I don’t need to explain to anyone the importance of healthy forests in the Badger State.”

The vote in the Wisconsin State Senate today is a win for Wisconsin.

The version of AB 367 passed by the State Assembly and SB 369 will provide assistance to buy and re-open the mills in Wisconsin Rapids and in Park Falls.

- The assistance would be loans, not grants.
- Funds to be used would be money received by the state under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“stimulus funding”), as well as money to be loaned from the State of Wisconsin’s Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL).
- The loans would be subject to terms agreed to by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and would have to be re-paid to the state by the end of 2024.
- In addition, the loans would not meet the entire cost of purchasing the mills. The bill requires private investment to be part of the purchase arrangement.

The amounts of the loans would be up to \$50 million from ARPA and up to \$50 million from BCPL toward the purchase of the Wisconsin Rapids mill, and up to \$15 from each source toward the purchase of the Park Falls mill.

“I am excited for the 72<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District and the state of Wisconsin that the Assembly and Senate agree that this legislation is fundamental to Wisconsin, and for it to be on Governor Evers’ desk for signature.”

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