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WALKER ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO MISLEAD ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

MADISON – Today, Assembly Democratic Leader Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) released a Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) memo showing the continued accounting tricks, shell games, and misleading figures from Governor Walker and his Department of Transportation. Over the course of the past few months, Governor Walker has held numerous press events to highlight changing completion dates for various projects. Recently, after announcing a short stretch of I-39/90 would be completed in 2020, the administration announced they were able to do so from \$246 million in savings over the biennium, despite no justification to back up where this savings came from. According to the memo, the Walker administration is double counting certain figures and misstates its ability to move projects forward. Representative Hintz released the following statement regarding this memo:

“If Governor Walker worked as hard at fixing our transportation funding crisis as he does covering it up through financial shell games, we may be in a different position today. Transportation used to be a priority that state leaders of both parties invested in because everyone understood the importance of good roads to our economy. No amount of excuses or deception is going to hide the consequences of Governor Walker’s transportation mismanagement. As Governor Walker faces the political fight of his life, his credibility on transportation funding is in worse shape than Wisconsin’s crumbling roads. It appears they just made up numbers.”

“If it wasn’t clear by now, as long as Governor Walker is in office we will never fix our transportation funding crisis. Every day, Wisconsinites drive on the 6th worst roads in the nation; facing extended delays, risking their safety and damage to their vehicles. No matter how many times the Governor holds a roadside press conference, he cannot change the fact that we’re postponing projects and spending nearly double the amount of revenue on debt service as when he took office in 2011. This is the perfect representation of a governor more concerned with his political future than getting the job done.”

LFB Memo Highlights

1. Analysts from Legislative Fiscal Bureau find that the Walker Administration overstated the amount of savings with the \$246 million figure.

a. In the memo it states *“Although DOT indicates that it was able to advance \$246 million in project work during the 2016-17 through 2018-19 period (to date), the project savings over the three year period total only \$167.7 million.”*

2. Of the savings the Walker Administration is touting, they are double counting \$130.4 million of the total.

a. In the memo it states, *“No additional projects will be funded associated with these savings. Rather, these savings were used to reduce the funding levels needed under Act 59 to fund the same level of program work over the three-year period.”*

3. The Walker Administration is claiming that “above base” funding level provided by the legislature may be used to advance projects. This is not true.

a. The LFB memo states, *“Once a program’s annual budget is established, it is this funding level, not the base funding level, that represents the baseline level of program work that is expected to be completed... once the biennial funding levels has been established, ongoing comparison of the actual project schedules funded to a base funding project schedule is not a relevant measure whether project schedules have changed.”*

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