

Foxconn bill passes Assembly committee on party-line vote

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The Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy pushed through the \$3 billion incentive package for Foxconn this evening over Dem objections.

The bill passed following the party-line adoption of a GOP substitute amendment that would add \$20 million for a worker training program and require that the final contract with Foxconn encourage the Taiwanese company to hire Wisconsin workers “when practically possible.”

Dems, though, argued the risks associated with Foxconn were too great, the incentives too generous and the protections lacking.

“If we really want to grow economic development here, this just isn’t the way to do it,” said Rep. Amanda Stuck, D-Appleton.

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Meanwhile, Rep. Jason Fields said lawmakers weren’t dealing with issues “that could potentially make this successful,” including establishing regional transportation networks and a greater pipeline for Wisconsin residents to fill the available jobs.

“Three billion dollars is a lot of money to risk of taxpayers on should’ve, could’ve, maybe that’ll happen,” said Fields, D-Glendale. “We’re not there yet. This deal is not there.”

While GOP Rep. Joel Kleefisch said some of Fields’ concerns were valid, he said it was “far better to have a worker shortage than a job shortage.”

And he said once the company began, workers would “find ways to get there,” pointing to Madison’s ride share program.

“I’m telling you, nothing comes without some risk,” the Oconomowoc Republican said. “And you know what, the fact that you’re questioning this, I’m all right with this.”

A floor vote on the bill is slotted for Thursday.