

# Rep. Allen: Statewide property tax should be eliminated

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Representative Scott Allen today again criticized the state property tax, otherwise known as the forestry mill tax, and called for its elimination.

“The statewide property tax is a massive redistribution of wealth from southeastern Wisconsin to other parts of the state,” said Rep. Allen. “Projects funded by the forestry mill tax continue to be funded under the Governor’s proposed budget and will need to stand on their own merit in future budget cycles.”

State law requires just 12% of the revenue from the tax to go to “southern” forests in 16 counties throughout southeastern Wisconsin. The balance goes to the other 56 counties. Comparatively, these same 16 counties contribute 50.2% of the revenue. This means that counties in the “southern forest” area see an annual net wealth loss of over \$31 million.

Furthermore, property taxes are most problematic for seniors and young adults. For seniors, many of whom are on a fixed income, rising property taxes means a larger portion of their income must go to pay property taxes, meaning less money for other essentials. For young adults, high property taxes make home ownership more difficult to attain because home mortgage payments have escrowed portions of the annual real estate taxes. Lenders examine the ratio of mortgage payment to monthly income.

It is likely that the Joint Committee on Finance will take up the forestry mill tax on Wednesday, May 31.