

Sen. Cowles: Legislature paves the way for highway project accountability

Posted on Friday, Feb 23, 2018

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Contact: Senator Robert Cowles ~ (920) 660-0615

MADISON– Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, issued the following statement after the passage of 2017 Senate Bill 85 during today's Assembly floor session:

"In early 2017, the Audit Bureau released a devastating evaluation of the DOT's State Highway Program. The audit revealed an unacceptable trend of under-estimating the cost of major highway projects during enumeration, and the Audit Bureau provided a roadmap to ensure this recklessness doesn't happen again. I encouraged the Senate to take prompt action, and these recommendations were passed through the Senate in early May before budget discussions on transportation commenced.

Senate Bill 85 reflects four recommendations from the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau's Report 17-2 on the State Highway Program into legislation. The bill requires the Department of Transportation to: include all associated costs with major highway projects in enumeration; include the cost estimate at enumeration in its semiannual reports; regularly report information on the ongoing costs to the legislature, and; require consideration of a cost-benefit analysis before undertaking a proposed major highway project.

"While we are well past budget discussions, the passage of this bill is an important step forward. With the passage of Senate Bill 85 by the Assembly, we are only one step away from enhancing oversight and transparency in our major highway project

design, construction, and costs. Today's vote proves that my colleagues in the legislature are serious about ensuring accountability in transportation projects for the taxpayers of Wisconsin. I'm pleased to see the passage of SB 85, and I look forward to the Governor's signature on this bill."