

One Wisconsin Now: New questions about Robin Vos, GOP's lame duck law changes as Foxconn scales back Wisconsin operation

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GOP Grabbed Control of Agency Overseeing Deal, Reduced Accountability Before Foxconn Suggests 'Modifications' to Biggest Ever State Subsidy of Foreign Corporation

MADISON, Wis. — According to media reports, Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn intends to drastically scale back its proposed Wisconsin operation, again. The latest developments in the troubled deal cut by Wisconsin Republicans, the largest ever state subsidy to a foreign corporation, raises new questions about their actions in a sore loser post election session to roll back accountability and increase their power over the agency administering the agreement.

“Robin Vos and legislative Republicans grabbed control of the agency in charge of the Foxconn deal and slashed accountability after losing the Governor who cut this horrible cocktail napkin deal,” said One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher. “The question now is: what did they know about Foxconn’s plans to drastically cut back their end of the bargain, and when did they know it?”

According to reporting by Reuters:

“Foxconn, which received controversial state and local incentives for the project, initially planned to manufacture advanced large screen displays for TVs and other consumer and professional products at the facility, which is under construction. It later said it would build smaller LCD screens instead. Now, those plans may be scaled back or even shelved, Louis Woo, special assistant to Foxconn Chief Executive Terry Gou ...”

The story went on to report that:

“Rather than a focus on LCD manufacturing, Foxconn wants to create a “technology hub” in Wisconsin that would largely consist of research facilities along with packaging and assembly operations, Woo said ... he added. ‘In Wisconsin we’re not building a factory ...”

While Foxconn was rolling back their commitment to Wisconsin, Robin Vos and his Republican cohorts were scheming to undermine accountability measures and grab control of the agency charged with overseeing the agreement.

In the sore loser session convened after Scott Walker’s defeat, the GOP controlled legislature gave themselves control over the board of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and shifted the state liaison for the project from the Department of Administration, overseen by Democratic Gov. Tony Evers, to WEDC. Vos’ cohorts also slashed accountability measures to verify that corporations like Foxconn are actually fulfilling their commitments before getting state tax subsidies.

Eicher concluded, “Robin Vos and the Republicans have been rigging the rules for Foxconn from the start and this bad deal for Wisconsin taxpayers keeps getting worse.”