

Rep. Kitchens: Joint Finance Committee approves Kitchens' Washington Island motion

Posted on Thursday, May 16, 2019

>> **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: Rep. Joel Kitchens
(608) 266-5350

MADISON, Wis. – The Joint Committee on Finance approved a budget motion today submitted by Rep. Joel Kitchens, R-Sturgeon Bay, that will defray a portion of the costs Washington Island incurred during a natural disaster event in 2018.

Kitchens' budget motion specifically requests that the state provide the island with \$2 million from the Wisconsin Disaster Fund to help cover part of the \$4.1 million in expenses that resulted from ice shoves critically damaging the only submarine cable that supplies electricity to the island community.

The budget motion also requires a cost share of 30 percent from the town on all reasonable and necessary costs documented by the island's co-op utility between June 27, 2018 and April 30, 2019.

"I am grateful for the Joint Finance Committee's decision today to earmark this much-needed funding in the state budget," Kitchens said. "At this moment, the disaster has caused the average monthly electricity bill for a Washington Island resident to increase by nearly \$20. By providing the town with the \$2 million in relief funds, we will cut that increase in half. That will go a long way toward helping these people recover from the unfortunate incident that placed so many hardships on them."

According to Washington Island Electric Cooperative Manager Robert Cornell,

repairing and replacing the cable has been a major undertaking for the town, not only physically, but financially as well.

“An unexpected \$4.1 million expense is a pretty difficult burden for a community of 700 to have to bear,” Cornell said. “We’ve had a lot of support in our efforts to get financial help for this disaster and Representative Kitchens has played a significant role in our success. All of us greatly appreciate Representative Kitchens’ efforts on our behalf and his support right from the first days of the submarine cable failure.”