

WISPIRG: Wisconsin's biennial budget will speed up transition to electric vehicles and improve public transit

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WISPIRG commends vital investments, but also calls for more action

Gov. Tony Evers today signed Wisconsin's 2019-21 biennial budget, which includes positive steps to accelerate the state's transition to electric vehicles and invests in Wisconsin's local transportation infrastructure, including public transit. The governor used his line-item veto power to direct \$10 million from the Volkswagen "Dieselgate" settlement - the maximum allowable amount - towards electric vehicle charging infrastructure, while Wisconsin's remaining \$15 million in settlement funds can be used for replacing polluting school and transit buses. After VW was caught three years ago violating emissions standards in 590,000 cars marketed as "low emissions," the automaker agreed to create an "Environmental Mitigation Trust" to be distributed across all 50 states.

WISPIRG director Peter Skopec issued the following statement:

"We applaud Gov. Evers for using his veto pen to move Wisconsin forward when it comes to transportation. His actions improve plans for our VW 'Dieselgate' settlement funds, which WISPIRG's recent scorecard found the state was underutilizing. The VW settlement funds are a tremendous opportunity for Wisconsin to move beyond a polluting transportation system that harms public

health and the climate. The governor's action today will help make the most of this unique opportunity.

"We also appreciate the investments made by Gov. Evers and the legislature in local transportation infrastructure, including in local road repair, public transit and paratransit. These choices are important steps forward. That said, state leaders must follow this with more - particularly when it comes to investing in public transportation systems statewide.

"With that in mind, we were disappointed to see the legislature significantly reduce the governor's initially proposed investment in public transportation, which would have done even more to create a cleaner, more effective transportation system that works for all in our state. Transforming the transportation system must be a priority for Wisconsin. We know that young people want to live in places where they can get around without a car, while our seniors recognize they must rely on non-driving options to remain engaged in their communities. To best serve Wisconsinites, and to protect public health and our environment, we must continue to forge ahead with clean, accessible transportation options.