

# Howard Marklein: 22 Marklein bills receive votes, 8 move to the governor

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The State Senate and the Assembly were both in session this week. Collectively, we considered 236 legislative proposals related to topics that span the gambit of issues in Wisconsin. Twenty two of my bills were voted on throughout the week. Eight of these bills are now awaiting Governor Tony Evers' signature.

I am very proud of our work together on a wide variety of legislation. To date, we have passed 20 of my bills with 12 being signed into law. I have 17 bills still pending and I hope to move more than a dozen of them through the Senate before we recess in March.

On Wednesday, February 19, 2020, the State Senate passed six of my bills. These bills make strong, common sense changes to state law to support taxpayers, help agriculture and incentivize investment in rural broadband. All six bills were passed with unanimous, bi-partisan support. I know these improvements will make a difference in the lives of the people I serve.

The Senate expected to vote on the Livestock Facility Siting bill I recently introduced this week. Unfortunately, one of the stakeholders raised an issue that we could not overcome in time to complete the bill this session. The change they requested would have impacted local control and I was not willing to create an imbalance in this legislation. Our original proposal was a good bill that gave farmers certainty and predictability while maintaining local control. This was my goal from the beginning of the process.

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My goal in crafting the livestock facility siting bill was always to support agriculture while maintaining local control for local governments. We worked hard, for months, to seek a balance between the needs of agriculture and the authority of local governments. I will continue to work with the farmers and the local government leaders I represent, along with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), to find ways to work together for the strength and prosperity of agriculture in Wisconsin.

Even though this bill will not move forward, I am extremely proud of our work on more than 40 other agriculture-related bills that I have been working on throughout the session. I am also proud of our work to build awareness and begin conversations about important topics in agriculture.

The following bills were passed by the State Senate:

**Senate Bill (SB) 583 - ATV/UTV Statutory Updates** - ATVs and UTVs are becoming increasingly popular. This bill updates state statutes to address the continuing growth of registration numbers and provides solutions necessary to better manage the registration program into the future. It includes safety provisions related to lighting, and after-market accessories that may be added to ATVs and UTVs. The proposal also increases the per mile funding available for summer and winter trail maintenance, and allows funds from the ATV segregated account to be used for trail mapping.

**SB 637 - Non-conforming structures in a flood plain** - This bill adopts the Federal guidelines when a homeowner seeks to flood proof their home in a flood plain. The bill restores local control over important property decisions about whether to allow homeowners to utilize additional flood proofing options and about whether to allow remodeling of existing, federally-compliant structures.

**SB 669 - Agricultural Truck Driver Hours of Service Exception** - Commercial truck drivers are subject to hours-of-service regulations that limit the number of hours they may consecutively drive. However, there is a limited exception for drivers who are hauling agricultural commodities such as milk, grain, livestock, or farm supplies within a 150-mile radius. Wisconsin currently allows unlimited driving from March 15 to December 15 each year for planting and harvesting. However, as we experienced in 2019-20, the harvest season extended well past December 15. This bill would make the exception for short-haul trips within a 150-mile radius year round.

**SB 720 - Department of Revenue (DOR) Omnibus** - This bill is an omnibus bill that makes a variety of technical updates to state statute to streamline processes for both taxpayers and state government. The DOR and legislators consulted with tax practitioners and stakeholders to craft a bill that federalizes state statutes to eliminate complexity for taxpayers. This bill also allows self-employed people to deduct their medical care insurance.

**Assembly Bill (AB) 310 - Using the best estimate of net new construction numbers when holding a referendum** - this bill is an expansion of 2013 Wisconsin Act 310 which allowed Green County to use estimated net new construction numbers when holding a referendum. It allows all local units of government in Wisconsin to use its best estimate of its net new construction numbers, based on the most current data available to it, to write its ballot question.

**AB 344 - Rural Broadband Infrastructure Property Tax Exemption** - provides an exemption from the telephone company property tax (a state levy on real and tangible property used in providing telecommunication services) for the infrastructure used to provide broadband service to a rural area. Our goal is to encourage expansion of broadband service where it currently is unavailable.

-Marklein, R-Spring Green, represents the 17th Senate District.