Rep. Shankland: Bipartisan legislation to support local government passed by both houses

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MADISON – Yesterday, legislation introduced by Rep. Katrina Shankland (D- Stevens Point) to streamline the process for local governments to hold a referendum was passed by the State Senate after already clearing the State Assembly. The bill, Assembly Bill 310/Senate Bill 291, provides local governments the latitude to use estimates instead of net new construction numbers, which eases the restrictions on their timeline for general elections and allows local governments to pose referendum questions during regularly scheduled elections rather than holding special elections.

As the author of this legislation, Rep. Shankland issued the following statement:

"Last year, I worked closely with the Department of Revenue and Portage County Board leaders who were exploring a referendum to sustainably fund the Portage County Health Care Center. Unfortunately, we found that our current state statutes created unnecessary hurdles that made the process inefficient and cumbersome.

"Building on what I learned through that effort, I introduced this legislation to change our referendum law to 1) save taxpayer money by incentivizing the use of general elections instead of special elections, 2) streamline the process to make government more efficient, and 3) empower our counties and municipalities to use the law as it was intended."

"I am proud that my work with the Counties Association, the League of Municipalities, the Towns Association, county clerks across the state, and my legislative colleagues has paid off. I am excited that we were able to pass this

legislation with broad bipartisan support in both houses and send it to the governor's desk. This is exactly the work we should be doing in government — identifying problems, proposing solutions, and working hard to get results."