

Cooperative Network: Applauds 2021 Wisconsin Act 58

Posted on Thursday, Jul 8, 2021

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MADISON, Wis. [July 8, 2021] - Cooperative Network - the trusted voice of cooperatives in Wisconsin and Minnesota - applauded Gov. Tony Evers today as he signed the 2021-23 biennial budget, now 2021 Wisconsin Act 58.

Important to Cooperative Network, topline items signed into law include Broadband funding of \$129 million and \$200,000 in each year of the biennium for Cooperative Feasibility studies provided by the Wisconsin Economic Development Cooperation (WEDC).

The governor also approved the Motor Vehicle Fuel Supplier Administrative Allowance. This issue means a tremendous amount to farm supply cooperatives and their bottom line. They must collect and remit the gasoline tax to the state of Wisconsin. This budget action brings the collection allowance up to 1.35% and more in-line with our neighboring states: 2.5% in Minnesota, 1.6% in Iowa, 3.0% in Missouri, 1.75% in Illinois, 1.6% in Indiana and 1.5% in Michigan.

State agency budget approvals are also pivotal to Cooperative Network members. Some highlights include:

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)

- \$2 million in funding for DATCP producer-led watershed grants
- \$5 million over five years for promotion of agricultural exports program
- \$400,000 in funding for a newly created meat processor grant program
- Funding and position authorization for four additional state meat inspectors
- \$400,000 in funding for dairy processor grants
- Farmer mental health funding of \$100,000 per year

- Maintain funding for agriculture non-point program

Department of Transportation (DOT)

- Two percent increase in general transportation aids
- \$100 million in Local Roads Improvement Program funding for local government projects
- \$15.3 million in new bonding for Harbor Assistance Program
- \$20 million for the Freight Rail Preservation Program

Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

- \$2 million in funding for well compensation and abandonment grants
- \$7 million for Soil and Water Resource Management Program
- Maintain funding for agriculture non-point program

“It’s great to see provisions specific to cooperatives, significant tax breaks and support for agriculture and transportation in this budget,” expressed Jennifer Wickman, Director of Government Affairs in Wisconsin. “Most of all, we are thrilled with this historic investment in broadband that will benefit all of our members and significantly impact rural prosperity.”

While an elimination of the Personal Property Tax was vetoed, Gov. Evers has preserved the funding for this so that local governments would have funding if the tax is eliminated. However, he is sending the “repeal” language back to the legislature to rework. This provides Cooperative Network with the opportunity to continue to work on this issue as a high priority for the remainder of this session.

A copy of the governor’s full veto message is available [here](#).