

# Dem lawmakers: Introduce state funding solution to support Verso & Park Falls mills

Posted on Monday, Jul 12, 2021

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*Legislative Democrats are ready to work with both parties and the Governor to provide funding to get the paper mills in Park Falls and Wisconsin Rapids up and running.*

MADISON – Today, Sen. Janet Bewley, Rep. Beth Meyers, Rep. Nick Milroy, and Rep. Katrina Shankland introduced legislation in support of both the Verso and Park Falls mills. The bill is substantially similar to an amendment offered to Assembly Bill 367 in both the Senate and Assembly, but it also includes funding for education needed to ensure our state meets maintenance of effort requirements.

“The Governor’s veto message made it clear that he shares the concerns outlined in the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau memo,” said Bewley (D- Mason). “The State is projected to have a surplus of 4.4 billion dollars. We can get this done in short order by setting aside a tiny fraction of that surplus – less than 1.5 percent – for loans that will help ensure the health of our forest and paper industries.”

“As a member of the Council on Forestry and a life-long resident of northern Wisconsin, I know firsthand how important the paper industry is not just in my neck of the woods, but to the entire state,” added Meyers (D- Bayfield). “This proposal is a step in the right direction to get the workforce in Price County back to work.”

“This bill provides the funding needed to ensure the success of the Wisconsin Rapids and Park Falls mills,” said Shankland (D- Stevens Point). “We are offering a state funding solution to ensure this legislation’s success, in contrast to the federal funding that left legal uncertainty and jeopardized the prior Mill Bill’s chances of

being signed into law. I have already reached out to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to encourage them to work with us on this approach, and I sincerely hope we can advance this state funding solution to support our paper industry in Wisconsin.”

“The Park Falls and Wisconsin Rapids paper mills are critically important to the economy of northern Wisconsin,” noted Milroy (D- Superior). “State support can help a regional cooperative keep these mills running and strengthen our forest products industry.”