

Gov. Evers: Announces upgraded bond ratings for state of Wisconsin, state continues to make economic rebounds

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced that the state of Wisconsin's bond rating has been upgraded by multiple agencies. Kroll Bond Rating Agency upgraded its long-term rating to AAA from AA+ for General Obligation (GO) Bonds, and S&P Global Ratings raised its long-term rating to AA+ from AA. These upgraded ratings reflect the continued commitment of Gov. Evers and his administration to improve the state of Wisconsin's credit profile, including more than quadrupling the state's budget reserves in the last three years, paying down the state's debt, and paying the state's bills on time.

Today's news comes as Wisconsin has continued to see economic rebounds in recent months. [Earlier this summer](#), the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau released projections showing "unprecedented" revenue projections more than \$4.4 billion higher than earlier estimates. The state's July [unemployment rate](#)—3.9 percent—has remained steady since April and is among the lowest in the nation, nearly returning to pre-pandemic levels, and [last week](#), the state announced that Wisconsin business exports grew 18.41 percent over the same period in 2020, exporting more than \$11.5 billion in products around the world from January to June 2021. At the same time, the state has been able to provide roughly \$685 million in additional net general and categorical school aids, restoring its commitment to two-thirds funding for public schools for the first time in two decades, while also providing one of the largest tax cuts in state history.

"Throughout the pandemic, my administration has worked hard to stabilize our

economy and put our state in the best position possible to rebound and recover from the unprecedented challenges of the last year,” said Gov. Evers. “Today’s news is yet another sign that we aren’t just bouncing back to the way things were, we’re making the kind of strategic, long-term investments that will ensure our state economy and our communities are stronger and more resilient than they were before the pandemic hit.”

Under Gov. Evers’ leadership, the state took action to reduce expenses and strengthen its ability to endure the economic uncertainty created by the coronavirus pandemic. Since his term began, Gov. Evers has overseen an increase of more than \$1.25 billion to the state’s rainy day fund, with the projected \$800 million increase in fiscal year 2021 more than doubling the previous record-high balance.

The upgraded ratings will provide the state of Wisconsin an avenue to borrow money at lower interest rates, which will result in lower debt service costs to Wisconsin taxpayers. The AAA rating from Kroll Bond Rating Agency is the first time the state’s underlying bond rating has been at the AAA-level by any rating agency since 1982. Kroll had last upgraded the state’s rating to AA+ in 2017, and S&P had last upgraded the state’s rating to AA in 2008.

In upgrading Wisconsin’s rating, [Kroll Bond Rating Agency](#) cited, the state’s “substantial liquidity, evidenced by a near tripling of budget reserves over the past three years; continuing, healthy revenue growth, despite substantial tax cuts; and an ongoing, post-COVID-19 recovery, fueled by a mature and expanding economy and favorable business climate.” [S&P Global Ratings](#) noted it expects the state “will continue to take responsive budgetary actions” to ensure the state’s fiscal stability, specifically pointing to the governor’s authority to responsibly manage the state’s budget. The state also maintains its ratings from Moody’s Investors Service at Aa1 and Fitch Ratings at AA+.