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League of Wisconsin Municipalities: Governor Evers proposes local government friendly budget

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Governor Evers' has proposed a "local government-friendly" state budget. The League of Wisconsin Municipalities applauds numerous initiatives in the Governor's budget increasing the tools cities and villages have to serve their residents. We encourage the Legislature to support these ideas, including:

• Critical and long-awaited increases in the shared revenue program, which has declined 49% (adjusted for inflation) over the last 20 years. Shared revenue is the largest single source of local government funding besides property taxes. (See "Declining Shared Revenues" graph.)

• Restoring a measure of local control to property tax levies, allowing local elected officials to approve local budgets with a 2% levy increase. Current state law has held property tax levies below the rate of inflation. This, in combination with repeated cutbacks in shared revenue, has forced local governments to reduce vital local services.

• Restoring payments for municipal services to pre-2011 levels. Local governments have been providing first responder service to state properties while the state pays less than 33 cents on the dollar for that service. Local property taxpayers have paid the rest.

• A local sales tax option for voters in Wisconsin's larger cities and its counties.

• Increases in General Transportation Aids and Transit Aids.

• Continuation of the highly successful Multimodal Local Supplement transportation program.

• Giving local governments the ability to support workforce housing with Tax Increment Financing.

• Protecting elections by allowing local election clerks to canvass absentee votes on the day prior to the election.

This budget protects taxpayers and funds essential local services like police, fire, EMS, and local transportation systems. It restores the ability of local leaders to make decisions that are in the best interest of their unique communities. This is truly a local government-friendly budget.