

Sen. Cowles: Community Revitalization Bill passes Senate

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MADISON– Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement after a bill he authored with Representatives Dave Armstrong (R-Rice Lake) and Paul Tittl (R-Manitowoc), [2021 Senate Bill 518](#), passed the Senate on a 29 – 2 vote during today’s floor session. Senate Bill 518 allows Environmental Remediation Tax Incremental Districts (ERTID) to be used to address in-building contaminants such as asbestos, man-made mineral fibers, toxic wood preservatives, heavy metals, and more:

“Regardless of what Wisconsin community you call home, I’m sure we can all find at least one local building that has been vacant and blighted for years, leaving an eyesore in downtown areas and leading to further sprawl which raises taxpayer costs as municipal services from roads to utilities to trash collection must be extended. In many cases, it may be pollutants or other harmful contaminants holding up redevelopment of those parcels, leading to continued local blight as revitalization opportunities are hindered due to cost.

“While ERTIDs have helped some local governments to encourage private remediation and redevelopment efforts in the heart of their communities, these few cases do not reflect the need of localities because structural contaminants do not currently qualify for use of this unique tool. While we continue to see sprawl in efforts to address housing shortages and business expansions or relocations, we also continue to see abandoned structures filled with the hazardous building materials of yesteryear go ignored and untouched.

“Senate Bill 518 doesn’t solve the problems Wisconsin communities are facing as they look to promote housing and revitalize downtowns, but it can certainly be part

of the solution. I believe this legislation is a common sense step that we can take to truly help spur local communities and economies all while eliminating materials harmful to human health and environmental quality from our cityscapes. I'm glad to have the support of my Senate colleagues on this effort. I also appreciate Representative Macco kicking this bill out of the Assembly Committee earlier today during a hearing, and hope to see action on this bill by the full Assembly soon."