

Rep. Shankland: Responds to assembly floor session on shared revenue, agricultural roads, and workforce housing

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MADISON— Following today's session of the Wisconsin State Assembly, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement regarding the Assembly's passage of AB 245, legislation to increase state aid to local governments through shared revenue; Senate Bill 247, legislation to dedicate state funding to improve agricultural roads in Wisconsin; and Assembly Bills 264, 265, 267, and 268, legislation to expand affordable housing options throughout Wisconsin.

"The people of Wisconsin deserve to live in a community where their needs are being met. Many of the bills passed today in the Assembly work towards this goal by updating our state's shared revenue model, making significant improvements to our agricultural roads, and facilitating the construction, maintenance, and preservation of affordable workforce housing in our state. I was proud to cosponsor bipartisan legislation to update our rural roads and make local workforce housing more readily available and affordable, and was glad to vote for legislation to provide significant increases in funding to our counties, towns, villages, and cities in Wisconsin.

"I am grateful that after years of being starved of necessary funding to our local communities, Wisconsin will finally have a shared revenue system that invests in towns, villages, cities, and counties and helps them thrive. These historic increases in funding are essential to Portage County communities and will support our first responders, invest in our community resources, reduce the overreliance on property

taxes to fund local governments, and improve the quality of life for our residents overall.

“In addition, I am thrilled that Senate Bill 247, legislation I cosponsored, was unanimously passed by the Assembly today. This legislation creates an agricultural road improvement grant program in which the state would reimburse local governments for projects that improve our agricultural roads. This program will strongly benefit our agricultural producers and improve agricultural roads in our rural communities, strengthening our local economy.

“The State Assembly also passed numerous bills from the Workforce Housing Bill Package I cosponsored, a bipartisan package of legislation that offers long-term solutions to the affordable housing challenges that people are facing across Wisconsin. AB 264 creates a residential housing loan program to provide 0% loans to develop single family, workforce, senior, and multi-family housing. AB 265 directly invests in rehabilitating existing housing units, bringing people closer to their workplaces, local businesses, and areas of economic activity. AB 267 updates our state’s workforce housing rehabilitation loan program to allow more people to improve existing properties. Finally, AB 268 converts commercial properties that are no longer being used into workforce and senior housing. In tandem, these four bills will improve access to affordable, quality housing in Wisconsin, which is critical to improving the economic well-being of our communities and addressing our state’s workforce shortage.

“I am pleased that the Legislature has moved toward debating whether or not any given compromise is good enough and away from debating whether or not we should compromise at all. Our job as legislators is and always has been to enact thoughtful solutions to the pressing issues our state is facing, and I am optimistic that we can continue working together to make meaningful steps forward to improve the lives of everyone in Wisconsin.”