

Sen. Marklein: Ag roads improvement bill passes Senate

Posted on Wednesday, Jun 7, 2023

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Madison, WI – Senate Bill (SB) 247, also known as the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP), co-authored by Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City), passed the Senate today with unanimous, bi-partisan support. This legislation creates a new \$150 million grant program for the improvement of agricultural roads to help ag producers and suppliers move goods to and from the farm.

“The funding in ARIP is targeted to the first-mile roads and bridges that farmers use every day,” Marklein said. “These are the small, Class B and weight-restricted roads that connect our farms to county and state highways. Unfortunately, many of these roads are in awful condition and our small towns need financial support to maintain and improve them. This program fills this need.”

“This is a wise investment of the one-time funds in our state surplus,” Marklein said. “This bill is widely supported by the entire ag-industry.”

Class B roads are the rural, country roads on which many farms are located. Farmers, and their suppliers, must navigate these roads to move goods to and from the farm. Unfortunately, for most towns, these are low-traffic, low-priority roads, but they are very important to the farmers who live and work on them. The goal of the program is to repair these roads and small bridges so that they will no longer be weight-restricted. The ARIP bill includes prioritization criteria to ensure money is used most effectively.

“We prioritize projects that increase access to the largest number of farmers, are located on the oldest roads, lead to the largest reduction in deferred or repeated trips, have the greatest economic impact, target roads where the only feasible

access to a farm is a single road, and provide funding to towns that cannot otherwise afford to maintain or repair these roads,” Marklein said.

SB 247 passed the Senate on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 unanimously. It will now be considered by the State Assembly.