

Gov. Evers: Over 160 stakeholders join Gov. Evers' call urging lawmakers to support FoodShare, prevent Wisconsin taxpayers from paying hundreds of millions of dollars in penalty fees to the Trump administration

Posted on Thursday, Feb 12, 2026

>> **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.](#)**

Contact: GovPress@wisconsin.gov

Nonpartisan coalition including seniors, agriculture stakeholders, and hunger relief organizations urges lawmakers to quickly approve key investments to prevent Wisconsin taxpayers from having to pay as much as \$205 million in penalty fees to the Trump Administration on top of hundreds of millions the 'Big Beautiful Bill' will cost in future budgets

MADISON — A nonpartisan coalition of over 160 stakeholders, including AARP, agribusinesses, hunger relief organizations, and advocacy groups from across Wisconsin today sent a letter to members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, urging lawmakers to approve key investments and resources designed to prevent Wisconsin taxpayers from having to pay as much as \$205 million in fees to the Trump Administration each year.

Because of President Donald Trump's 'Big Beautiful Bill,' Wisconsin taxpayers will already be on the hook for [over \\$284 million](#) in new costs in future state budgets.

Today, a broad coalition of stakeholders ranging from agricultural advocates and healthcare associations to community food banks, social services organizations, and more, implored lawmakers to approve roughly \$70 million in funding the state needs to implement control measures and cover the federal cut to administrative costs associated with changes to the state's FoodShare program brought on by President Trump's 'Big Beautiful Bill. Without this funding, which is essential to implement changes under the 'Big Beautiful Bill,' Wisconsin taxpayers could have to pay upwards of \$200 million in penalty fees to the federal government each year.

"Because of President Trump's so-called 'Big Beautiful Bill,' Wisconsin taxpayers will already be on the hook for over a quarter of a billion dollars in new costs in future budgets. And if we don't get the resources we've been asking for in order to keep our FoodShare error rate low, Wisconsinites could have to pay hundreds of millions even more in penalty fees each year. That just cannot happen—it will cripple future state budgets," said Gov. Evers. "This funding is critical, and the Legislature must get this done.

"As anyone can see based on the folks who are urging the Legislature to act, this is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue—this is a Wisconsin issue," Gov. Evers continued. "We need lawmakers to take this seriously, get this done, and get it done now. Wisconsin taxpayers cannot afford more months of the Legislature's delays. It's pretty simple—if Republican lawmakers don't want to be blamed for Wisconsin taxpayers being forced to pay exorbitant and avoidable penalty fees to the Trump Administration, they need to stop messing around and get this done so we can prevent that from happening."

The Legislature has had a roughly \$70 million ask in front of them since August of last year aimed at preventing Wisconsin taxpayers from having to pay penalty fees to the Trump Administration. The Evers Administration has spent months in the wake of the 2025-27 Biennial Budget's passage, which was enacted just days before the so-called 'Big Beautiful Bill' was passed, urging Republican lawmakers to approve the necessary investments and staffing resources the state needs to begin implementing components of the 'Big Beautiful Bill,' as required by law. During bipartisan budget negotiations, Republican leaders gave the governor their word that they would be willing to work together to address outstanding challenges caused by the 'Big Beautiful Bill.' Since then, Republican lawmakers have yet to approve the key investments and resources the state has been asking to receive for months.

In a new letter today, more than 160 nonpartisan organizations asked the Legislature to take immediate action to provide funding for these changes, noting that “additional delays in providing this funding will put Wisconsin taxpayers at risk of paying for increased costs and will negatively impact communities, businesses, and SNAP recipients across Wisconsin,” a message Gov. Evers emphasized in his [legislative priorities letter](#) earlier this year, in which he similarly implored lawmakers to approve these funds.

A copy of the advocates’ letter to members of the Wisconsin State Legislature is available [here](#), and a transcript of the letter is available below.

Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature: The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” (OBBBA) signed into law on July 4, 2025, contained several significant changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has estimated \$69.2 million in GPR is needed to implement these changes in Wisconsin’s FoodShare program in this biennium and has made a request to the legislature for that funding, including:

- *\$32.4 million to cover the increase in the state share of administrative costs from 50% to 75%. This increased rate begins October 1, 2026, and is not accounted for in the Wisconsin 2025-27 state budget.*
- *\$16.1 million for additional DHS and county staff positions to achieve and maintain an error rate below 6%. Keeping Wisconsin’s error rate below 6% helps Wisconsin avoid penalties up to \$205 million that the federal government could charge the state in future years.*
- *\$20.7 million to support an increase in participation in the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program due to expanded work requirements. Over 43,000 people are at risk of losing basic food necessities if they don’t get the help they need to meet work requirements.*

The 165 undersigned organizations ask the Wisconsin State Legislature to take immediate action to provide funding for these changes. Additional delays in providing this funding will put Wisconsin taxpayers at risk of paying for increased costs and will negatively impact communities, businesses, and SNAP recipients across Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration, and please reach out to organizations located in your district and/or serving your constituents for more information about their interest in ensuring adequate funding for administration of these critical programs.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON THE STATE'S EFFORTS TO KEEP FOODSHARE PAYMENT ERROR RATES LOW AND SAVE WISCONSIN TAXPAYERS HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS IN POTENTIAL FUTURE COSTS

Roughly 700,000 Wisconsinites, including nearly 270,000 kids, rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) aid, also known as [FoodShare in Wisconsin](#), and last year, Republicans in the U.S. Congress passed the 'Big Beautiful Bill,' which cut essential SNAP food assistance by about 20 percent by increasing red tape, nutrition education programs, and forcing states to pay more for SNAP programs like Wisconsin's FoodShare. Due to these changes, as many as 43,700 Wisconsinites are at immediate risk of losing access to basic food necessities, and independent grocers and convenience stores, which already operate on thin margins, are often the main source of food for Wisconsinites in rural areas, are increasingly concerned about their bottom line and keeping their doors open.

Additionally, under the new federal changes, states will be forced to pay for a higher share of SNAP benefit costs if payment error rates exceed certain thresholds. In Wisconsin, based on recent fiscal year 2025 data, this could cost taxpayers an additional over \$200 million every year, or \$400 million over the course of our two-year state budget cycle, not including the [more than \\$280 million](#) it will already cost Wisconsin taxpayers to implement other changes included in Republicans' so-called 'Big Beautiful Bill.'

The governor has maintained that this is untenable for Wisconsin taxpayers and will blow a hole in future state budgets, but that the Legislature can act now and help prevent Wisconsinites from having to pay over \$200 million in penalties to the federal government. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) [identified](#) a need for an additional \$69.2 million in state fiscal years 2025-27 to implement the identified quality control measures and to cover the federal cut to administrative costs, and approval of these funds has now been [publicly supported](#) by a broad coalition of agribusinesses, hunger relief stakeholders, and advocacy groups from across the state.

As detailed in their letter, the \$69.2 million in funding would include \$32.4 million to cover the increase in the state's share of administrative costs as a result of the 'Big Beautiful Bill,' which shifted 75 percent of administrative costs to states, as opposed to the current 50 percent, \$16.1 million for additional DHS and county staff positions to achieve and maintain a FoodShare error rate below six percent and

avoid federal penalties, and \$20.7 million to support an increase in participation in the FoodShare Employment and Training program due to expanded work requirements.