



Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

News Release

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Governor's Appointed Council of Forestry Opposes Elimination of Forestry Mill Tax

Madison ... Representative Jeff Mursau (R-Crivitz) applauds the Governor's Council of Forestry in opposing Governor Walker's budget recommendation to eliminate the Forestry Mill Tax. Representative Mursau, Chair of the Assembly's Forestry Committee and member of the council, voted with the majority in opposition.

"It's unfortunate the Governor didn't consult the Council before submitting his budget to the Legislature," said Mursau. "Forestry is the number two industry in the state so they should've had a seat at the table before significant funding decisions were made."

In the mid-1920's, Wisconsin voters added to the state's Constitution the ability to levy a tax for the "...acquisition, development, and protection of forest areas in the state". Today, the average homeowner pays about \$2 per month to support: planting and harvesting of trees, wildfire detection and control, environmental education programs for school children, and outdoor recreational opportunities.

The Governor proposes eliminating the segregated funding source and instead he would fund forestry from income and sales tax revenues. This means the industry would be forced to compete (in good economic times and bad) for adequate funding with education, transportation, and healthcare in future budgets.

"I'm not willing to jeopardize the sustainability of the industry or the safety of our volunteer firemen and women just so I can say I saved homeowners \$2 a month", expressed Mursau. "Forestry is the number one employer in several northern Wisconsin Counties. Families rely on the commitment our ancestors made to the industry over 90 years ago. I won't turn my back on my constituents who overwhelming support keeping the mill tax."

The Governor's appointed council voted against his proposal and instead recommends an audit of the Forestry Account to ensure the state isn't collecting more than necessary or that funds are being used to support unrelated state services.

"The council's recommendation is a more fiscally sound proposal," claimed Mursau. "We'll have tangible information we can use to make informed budget decisions, which could include lowering the mill tax. Let's get the facts before we threaten the sustainability of our forestry industry."