



SIERRA CLUB
JOHN MUIR CHAPTER



Wisconsin Council of the
Blind & Visually Impaired



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Coalition for More Responsible Transportation Members Applaud Governor Evers's Proposed Transportation Budget

Groups support transit, road maintenance increase and focus on fixing instead of expanding highways

MADISON - Gov. Tony Evers announced his proposal yesterday for the 2019-2021 State Transportation Budget. Members of the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation, including WISDOM, the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter, and WISPIRG, applauded steps forward on public transit and the de-prioritization of highway expansions. Coalition members responded to the budget proposal with the following statements:

"We are glad to see the governor has prioritized increasing funding for public transportation, paratransit and specialized transportation for elders and people with disabilities, and repairing existing roads, instead of widening highways," said **Emma Fisher, WISPIRG organizer**. "Getting our spending priorities right is the first step towards creating a transportation system that accommodates Wisconsin's changing demographics and transportation preferences, and meets 21st century needs."

"Wisconsin's decades-long focus on building wider highways has resulted in a transportation system that is polluting, creates urban sprawl, and degrades our natural heritage," said **Deb Nemeth, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Executive Director**. "We're very happy to see the governor's shift away from highway expansion to fixing our local roads and increasing funding for transit. The exclusion to county and municipal levy limits for cross municipality transit routes is a big step toward the efficient, interconnected transportation system we need," Nemeth concluded.

"Vibrant and diverse transit alternatives, along with walkable communities, are vital for vulnerable populations, like people living with disabilities and elders, to maintain a sustainable quality of life. About 60 percent of Wisconsin's more than 650,000 residents with disabilities struggle to gain and maintain employment and attain health care, due to lack of transportation availability," said **Denise Jess, Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired, CEO/Executive Director**. "The Governor's proposals for programs like paratransit and specialized transportation open doors of opportunity for our elders and people with disabilities. This is vitally important as these populations continue to grow statewide."

“Gov. Evers’s proposed increase in funding for public transit helps make up for Gov. Walker’s cuts,” said **Barbara Pfarr, WISDOM Transit Task Force Chair**. “Those cuts, along with flat state aids to communities, led to cuts in bus service all over the state. Workers, need increased bus service. We need to serve all the people of Wisconsin, not just those who drive cars.”

“In the past, we’ve seen disproportional investments in expanding highways at the cost of our local roads, transit systems, and biking and walking infrastructure. This is undermining our ability to curb climate change and is harming the health of Wisconsinites, especially Wisconsinites of Color, who are more likely to live near major highways and less likely to own a car. We applaud Gov. Evers recognizing the harm that highway expansions cause and instead investing in forms of transportation that are forward-thinking and are good for people and the planet, like public transit,” said **Elizabeth Ward, Sierra Club** in Wisconsin. “As the Legislature takes up the budget, we hope to see continued support for efforts to reign in wasteful, harmful highway expansions and for cost-effective forms of transportation that help Wisconsin.”

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1000 Friends of Wisconsin is a statewide nonprofit organization that works to promote land use policies and activities that advance healthy communities, positive economic outcomes, and environmental benefits in Wisconsin.

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The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. In Wisconsin, the **Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter**’s 18,000 members work to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin.

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WISDOM is a network of grassroots organizations working with a common voice on issues of social justice. It includes 160 religious congregations, EXPO, EX-incarcerated People Organizing, and Menekanaehkem of the Menominee Reservation. WISDOM and its local organizations work on efforts to end mass incarceration, promote Immigrant Rights, Public Transportation, Economic Justice, Health Care availability, and more.

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The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired is a 67-year old, statewide nonprofit, whose mission is to promote the dignity and empowerment of the people of Wisconsin who are blind or visually impaired through advocacy, vision services and education.

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The **Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG)** is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy organization that stands up to powerful interests whenever they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to fully participate in democratic society.

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