



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Crucial Investments for a Crucial Time

Assembly GOP seeks to expand on Governor Evers' lackluster investments

Bloomer – Earlier today, Assembly Republicans announced their spending priorities for the \$3.2 billion Wisconsin is set to receive from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). This comes after Governor Evers announced broad commitments for \$2.5 billion of these funds yesterday. Following a press conference, State Representatives Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer), Jesse James (R-Altoona), Treig Pronschinske (R-Mondovi), Warren Petryk (R-Town of Washington), Dave Armstrong (R-Rice Lake), Shannon Zimmerman (R-River Falls), Clint Moses (R-Menomonie) and James Edming (R-Glen Flora) made the following statements:

“I think there is some common ground we can find with the Governor on these funds, including helping small businesses and investing in the tourism industry,” Rep. Summerfield said. “Unfortunately, I am disappointed with what little attention he gave to broadband services considering he declared 2021 the ‘Year of Broadband’. I am calling on Governor Evers to follow through on this promise and invest at least \$500 million into the Broadband Expansion Grant Program.”

“In the 68th Assembly District we have many unserved areas compared to underserved areas. We must invest in our rural communities so they have the same access and ability to succeed as those who live in the urban areas,” said Rep. James. “Just think of the children who don’t have access and have to go to grandma and grandpa’s house to do their homework, or their library if it is open. Think about the impact this will have on our farmers, and the economic opportunities it could bring to our villages and towns. We have learned how important broadband access is during these times we are living in today. We need to invest in the future and now is the time.”

“Broadband is vital to the growth of our rural communities. It’s been long past due that we invest in technology to assist our constituents. The pandemic has helped to show how desperately this is needed,” said Rep. Pronschinske. “We are looking to spend money on things that will actually make a difference.”

"Thankfully the labor market continues to improve from the effects of the government mandated shutdowns from last year. But the strength of our recovery is going to be based upon the ability of our employers to find skilled employees to hire to keep their businesses growing and expanding in our area," said Representative Warren Petryk. "We have opportunity in front of us to direct these one-time federal funds to get people skilled up and get a family supporting job in our area."

“From a rural development perspective, I’m pleased Governor Evers plans to include monies to assist small businesses hurt by Covid and to invest in Tourism marketing to get visitors back to our regions,” Rep. Armstrong stated. “I am less than thrilled with the Broadband amount. The Federal money is a one-time injection into Wisconsin. Frankly, I was looking for a bold approach to closing the broadband gaps that exist in Wisconsin, especially in our region. I had hoped to see 2-3 times what the Governor announced.”

“This money from Washington is the money of our next generation and we have an obligation to be thoughtful and strategic with it,” Rep. Zimmerman said. “Getting our families back on track, opening businesses and broadband all represent sound ways to both exit this period and strengthen Wisconsin for the future.”

“It’s very important that these tax dollars are put where they will have the most benefit and impact,” said Rep. Moses. “The hard-working Wi taxpayers were hit the hardest over the past year. They should see additional assistance coming out of the pandemic. This is their money and they can spend it better than the government.”

“Investing in broadband and long-term care are two of the top priorities for not only my constituents but many folks across northern Wisconsin,” said Rep. Edming. “While I am pleased that Governor Evers does plan on investing in broadband I think we can do more. In addition, we need to use this funding to invest more in our long-term care facilities to help them meet the needs of the people in their care.”

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