



DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2021

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JFC Democrats: Republicans Attempt to Distract and Undermine Badger Bounceback Budget's Investments

MADISON – Today the Joint Committee on Finance held the second and final day of agency briefings on Governor Tony Evers' Badger Bounceback Budget, followed by both a public hearing and an executive session on a Republican package of bills attempting to control the allocation of Wisconsin's portion federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

During the agency briefings, the Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Public Service Commission presented their agency priorities in the budget. The Committee heard testimony on how the proposed budget invests in clean water, natural resources, energy efficiency and affordability, sustainability, and other measures designed to move Wisconsin toward a strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Democratic members on the Joint Finance Committee released the following statements regarding today's agency briefings and the ARPA bills:

"Our state is at a critical point on our path to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Evers' budget is vital to those efforts," said Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D-West Point). "Despite the Governor's successful leadership, Republicans have repeatedly sought to undermine his efforts with frivolous lawsuits and legislation that possibly isn't legitimate. These bills are nothing more than a distraction from a party that failed to show up when our state needed them most. Republicans lost any credibility on what should be done to help communities bounce back when they took a yearlong vacation during a public health crisis."

"While Republicans are busy with their political 'smoke and mirrors' game, Governor Evers' administration is hard at work laying out its plan to help our state to bounce back from the pandemic," said Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee). "As pointed out by the Department of Natural Resources, our communities can only be successful if we have clean water for our families to drink and visitors to enjoy. We have real, urgent issues to address in Wisconsin like our alarming and dangerous lead poisoning rates. Governor Evers' budget proposal shows he takes these issues seriously by investing \$40 million to combat our lead service line crisis."

Representative Greta Neubauer (D-Racine) stated, "Today's briefings showed that we are truly at a crossroads in Wisconsin. We have the opportunity to invest today in programs and projects that will define the future of our state: When we invest in water quality by confronting PFAS contamination and the lead pipe crisis, we can protect the health and wellbeing of our kids and families. When we expand broadband across Wisconsin, we create economic and educational opportunities in every corner of the state. And when we tackle the climate crisis, we can create good jobs and reduce longstanding inequities. Governor Evers' budget chooses to invest in a better, brighter future so we all can bounce back from the COVID crisis."

Representative Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) said, “Over the past two days, we heard agency plans for Badger Bounceback Budget investments that will be critical to rebuild and recover after the pandemic. The Committee had the opportunity to discuss a resilient future, but the Republicans continued their attempts to catch up with the Governor and distract from his winning budget provisions.”

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