



**WISCONSIN TOWNS
ASSOCIATION**
Empowering Town Officials

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For Immediate Release
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Recent Acts Supporting Rural Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Towns Association applauds the Legislature and Governor Evers for recently enacting several laws supporting rural Wisconsin and town government.

✓ Act 162 related to town bridge funding

Wisconsin towns rely on two infrastructure programs to repair seriously deteriorated bridges: the state and federally funded Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program that provides 80% funding for certain bridge repairs and a town funded bridge aid program in each county that provides 50% funding. Historically, these two programs have been used in conjunction with each other. Act 162 codifies this practice, specifically authorizing town funded county bridge aid to pay 50% of the local match under the Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program.

“Safe and solid town bridges are critical for Wisconsin’s traveling public and the agricultural, forestry, manufacturing, and tourism industries,” said Jerry Derr, President of the Wisconsin Towns Association. “Codifying the synergistic use of these funding mechanisms provides the support and consistency towns need to help address local infrastructure needs.”

WTA thanks Senator James and Representatives Brooks and Rozar for authoring this proposal.

✓ Act 264 related to collaborative town and county zoning

Counties and towns in Wisconsin share general zoning authority in unincorporated areas, with the best approach to zoning differing from place to place. Act 264 creates a process for towns that had opted to be subject to a county zoning ordinance to withdraw from that coverage and adopt a home-grown zoning approach. This will promote counties and towns working more closely with each other as they strive to adopt land use regulations that best serve the community.

“Act 264 creates another tool for communities to adopt land use regulations that best serve local needs,” continued Derr. “Recent history has shown that empowering towns with zoning authority

ultimately creates increased collaboration between local governments and regulations that are more effective at achieving mutual goals.”

WTA thanks Senator Ballweg and Representative VanderMeer for authoring this proposal.

✓ **Act 265 creating a pre-disaster flood resilience grant program**

Funded with \$2 million appropriated in the 2023-25 state budget, Act 265 creates a new grant program to provide funding for local governments to assess flood vulnerabilities and implement mitigation efforts before disasters occur.

“Recent heavy flooding has caused major economic and public safety disasters throughout Wisconsin,” said Mike Koles, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Towns Association. “The new program created by Act 265 will provide local governments with the tools and funding needed to mitigate flood damage before it occurs.”

WTA thanks Senator Quinn and Representative Oldenburg for authoring this proposal.

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