

# Wisconsin Towns Association

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## 2015-16 Legislative Priorities

1257 town governments provide general services to over 1.7 million citizens (over 30% of state population). 95% of Wisconsin's land area is in towns. Our lands support much of Wisconsin's economy, including agriculture, tourism, logging, and mining. Commercial, retail, and industrial businesses thrive in our urban areas. Towns maintain over 62,000 miles of town highways, over 50% of all public highways. Town government is efficient and effective in the delivery of a full range of services, including but not limited to highways; fire, police, and ambulance; tax assessment, billing, and collecting; conducting elections; providing solid waste and recycling services; and, providing sewer and water.

**The WTA believes that to continue the efficient and effective delivery of services and grow Wisconsin's economy, towns must receive a fair share of state resources, have local control over the decisions that affect them, and be empowered with the flexibility to invest in and provide the services for the citizens as determined by each town.**

We support the following priorities in the 2015-2016 Legislative Session:

## Transportation Opportunities

1. Supports an increase in General Transportation Aids per road mile investment per Sec. 86.30. 2014 and 2015 aids were \$2,117 and \$2,202, respectively.
2. Supports maintaining or increasing local road improvement programs (TRIP/TRID) and increasing the state-local funding cost share ratio for TRID from 50-50 to 80-20.
3. Supports legislation to allow for manure drag lines in local road rights of way by modifying Sec. 86.16.
4. Supports eliminating the cap on town board authority under Sec. 82.03 (2) to spend on town highways, currently limited to \$5,000 per mile without town elector meeting approval.
5. Supports the provision of local government authority to replace culverts (at same size, dimensions, and level) without the requirement of a DNR permit between May 1 and October 1.

## **Land Use and Boundary Opportunities**

1. Supports the Dane County Towns Association effort to make legislative changes to Sec. 59.69(5) to empower Dane County towns to withdraw from county zoning and eliminate Sec. 60.62(3) for Dane County towns, which requires County Board approval if a town adopts a town zoning ordinance or amendment, if in a county with a county general zoning ordinance.
2. Supports a legislative change that reverses the judicial decision in Hegwood v. Town of Eagle, thus returning town general zoning authority in the shoreland area and retaining farmland preservation credits for countless farmers and on thousands of acres of farmland.
3. Supports eliminating the requirement that the county “must include a city or village plan without change” within the county comprehensive plan under Sec. 59.69 (3)(b).
4. Supports modification of extraterritorial zoning authority of cities and villages, including limiting the time for negotiation to one year (currently two) and limiting the ability to invoke the process per Sec. 62.23(7a).
5. Supports legislation that would eliminate “balloon on a string” annexation, unless it was used with town consent as part of a cooperative boundary agreement.

## **Public Safety Opportunities**

1. Current law exempts joint municipal fire departments from the levy limit law per Sec. 66.0602(3) (h). WTA supports enhancing the current exemption to include joint municipal ambulance services and contracted services for fire and/or ambulance from levy limits.

## **Legal Notice Opportunities**

1. Supports altering the legal notice requirements contained in Sec. 985.02 so that a government can choose to use a website as a legal posting site, and if a website is used, that only one other legal posting location is required.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT**

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