

MEMORANDUM

TO: County Board Chairs, County Executives, County Administrators/Administrative Coordinators and County Clerks

FROM: Mark D. O'Connell, President & CEO

DATE: August 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Resolutions of the Wisconsin Counties Association

Enclosed please find the resolutions to be considered at the WCA Annual Business Meeting. The meeting will occur on Sunday, September 20, 2026 in Africa 10-30 at the Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. Credentials may be picked up starting at 3:00 p.m. The Annual Business Meeting will begin promptly at 3:30 p.m.

Each county is allotted one voting delegate at the Annual Business Meeting. The county board chair serves as the county's voting delegate; however, if the county board chair is unable to attend, a vice-chair can automatically serve as the county's voting delegate.

The county board chair can also designate an official representative (county board supervisor or county executive only), in writing, to serve as the voting delegate. Enclosed please find a copy of the Annual Business Meeting Designee Form. Please fill out the form and return it to the WCA office if your county needs to designate an official representative. We hope to have every county represented at the Annual Business Meeting this year.

Note: We have already received designee forms from several counties. Designees do not receive this mailing. Designees will receive the full business meeting packet, that includes the resolutions, approximately two weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

Six years ago we implemented a new process to expedite the consideration of resolutions at the Annual Business Meeting. The process worked well so we are going to utilize the process at the 2026 WCA Annual Business Meeting.

Instead of taking up each resolution individually, the body will be asked to act on the resolutions as a block. However, each county will have the opportunity to request separate action on resolutions, as well as the opportunity to offer amendments. **We do ask, however, that counties notify us by September 2 regarding amendments and requests for separate**

action (see attached forms). Otherwise, a single motion will be used to adopt the Resolutions Committee recommendations on the remaining resolutions.

Please review the resolutions carefully as it is requested that you fill out the attached forms prior to September 2 if you desire separate action on a resolution or wish to offer an amendment.

Enclosed please find the following forms that need to be completed and returned to the WCA office:

- WCA Annual Business Meeting Designee Form (if needed and not already submitted)
- Notification of Amendments (due September 2)
- Request for Separate Action on Resolutions (due September 2)

Also, if you have not yet done so please be sure to register for the WCA Annual Conference taking place in Wisconsin Dells from September 20-22, 2026.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf, Director of Outreach & Member Engagement, at the WCA office at 608-663-7188 (office), 608-225-3017 (cell), or diedrick@wicounties.org.

2026
Resolutions
of the
Wisconsin Counties
Association

Presented by the
2026 WCA Resolutions Committee
August 10, 2026
Holiday Inn Madison at The American Center
Madison, Wisconsin

2026 WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

WCA District	Name	Title
WCA Second Vice Chair (Committee Chair)	Thomas Wegner	Sheboygan County Board Supervisor
Southeast	Caroline Gomez-Tom	Milwaukee County Board Supervisor
Southeast	Sheila Reiff	Walworth County Board Vice Chair
East Central	Alice Connors	Calumet County Board Chair
East Central	Dan Gabrielson	Outagamie County Board Chair
North Central	Bill Clendenning	Wood County Board Supervisor
North Central	Connie Seefeldt	Marinette County Vice Chair
Northwest	Patricia Hurd	Burnett County Supervisor
Northwest	Lolita Olson	Washburn County Board Chair
West Central	Louie Okey	Barron County Board Chair
West Central	Gary Stene	Dunn County Board Vice Chair
Western	Tina Tryggestad	La Crosse County Board Chair
Western	Dennis Bork	Buffalo County Board Chair
Southern	Jerry Guth	Green County Board Chair
Southern	Kevin Leary	Rock County Board Chair

STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Agriculture, Environment & Land Use: Mike Hofberger, Calumet County Supervisor
 General Government & Finance: David Frohling, Dodge County Board Chair
 Health & Human Services: Kari Ives, Chippewa County Supervisor
 Judicial & Public Safety: Vernon Koch, Sheboygan County Supervisor
 Transportation & Public Works: Kenneth Depperman, Fond du Lac County Supervisor
 UW-Madison, Division of Extension & Education: Robert Keeney, Grant County Board Chair

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 1

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Bayfield County

Relating to

Supporting Increased Payments to Towns with County Forest Lands

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has more than 2.4 million acres of County Forest Lands, which provide public benefits including timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation, tourism, and public access; and

WHEREAS, County Forest Lands are not subject to local property taxes, but local units of government receive statute specific county forest acreage share payments; and

WHEREAS, those towns must still maintain roads, provide emergency services, and support other local needs related to public access and land use; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 28.11(8)(a) requires the Department of Natural Resources to make annual acreage payments to town treasurers for county forest lands located in their towns; and

WHEREAS, current law provides a payment of \$0.63 per acre, and preliminary legislative drafts have proposed increasing that payment to higher amounts, including \$1.00 per acre and \$3.50 per acre; and

WHEREAS, a one-time increase would help, but the payment will lose value again over time unless it is adjusted for inflation; and

WHEREAS, increasing and indexing the payment would better support towns that host County Forest Lands and help them maintain essential local services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support legislation to increase the county forest acreage payment under Wis. Stat. § 28.11(8)(a).

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Depperman, to adopt. Motion carried.

2026 Conference Resolution 1

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

II.I.16. Support legislation to increase the county forest acreage payment under Wis. Stat. § 28.11(8)(a), including an annual adjustment for inflation.

Agriculture, Environment and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 2

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Jefferson County

Relating to

Urging the Wisconsin Legislature and State Agencies to Strengthen the State of Wisconsin's Response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

WHEREAS, commercial and backyard poultry producers lack access to obtain and administer avian influenza vaccines which could reduce outbreak severity, decrease mass depopulation, and limit the scale of disposal activities, and the legislature could work with DATCP and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to request an effective vaccination program; and

WHEREAS, DATCP and DNR should conduct a comprehensive review of regulations related to carcass disposal and develop clear criteria for when off-site disposal is appropriate, and furthermore should provide flexibility to select the lowest-risk disposal method available based on site conditions and evidence; and

WHEREAS, DATCP and DNR should investigate incineration as a disposal option and work with the Legislature to fund pilot projects or infrastructure to support this method; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature should financially support expanded groundwater monitoring and sampling near composting or disposal sites, including guidance on constituents and wells to be included in sampling; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature should provide funding to assist counties with water testing, environmental surveillance, law enforcement involvement, and public communication during outbreaks; and

WHEREAS, Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations should submit emergency response plans to the DNR that include pre-identified disposal/compost locations and a site risk assessment completed in advance, with the assessment on file with DNR and county emergency management so suitability can be confirmed quickly based on current conditions, with risk assessments including at a minimum information on soil assessment, depth to groundwater, regional groundwater flow direction, distance to surface water, distance to drinking water wells, distance from facility, and other considerations; and

WHEREAS, a cooperative review of many sections of Statutes and Administrative Code will need to occur to modernize the state's response to these outbreaks; and

2026 Conference Resolution 2

WHEREAS, while local input is vital, statewide uniformity remains a critical goal to ensure predictability, fairness, and consistency for both agricultural producers and regulatory bodies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Legislature, and the Governor to modernize the state's regulatory framework related to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and similar diseases that can cause mass animal mortality, and to do so in collaboration with national and local partners.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Stene, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

IX.C.10. Support modernization of the state's regulatory framework related to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and similar diseases that can cause mass animal mortality, and to do so in collaboration with national and local partners. Modernization efforts include:

- A comprehensive review of regulations related to carcass disposal and development of clear criteria for when off-site disposal is appropriate and furthermore should provide flexibility to select the lowest-risk disposal method available based on site conditions and evidence.
- Investigation of incineration as a disposal option and work with the Legislature to fund pilot projects or infrastructure to support this method.
- State financial support for expanded groundwater monitoring and sampling near composting or disposal sites, including guidance on constituents and wells to be included in sampling.
- State funding to assist counties with water testing, environmental surveillance, law enforcement involvement, and public communication during outbreaks.
- Requiring Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations submit emergency response plans to the DNR that include pre-identified disposal/compost locations and a site risk assessment completed in advance, with the assessment on file with DNR and county emergency management so suitability can be confirmed quickly based on current conditions, with risk assessments including at a minimum information on soil assessment, depth to groundwater, regional groundwater flow direction, distance to

2026 Conference Resolution 2

surface water, distance to drinking water wells, distance from facility, and other considerations.

Agriculture, Environment, and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 3

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Door County

Relating to

Requesting the Wisconsin State Legislature Pass Legislation to Stop Corporations from Purchasing Single- Family Homes

WHEREAS, the County of Door believes corporations supported by private equity groups have acquired a significant number of homes throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, if this trend persists, it is projected that institutional investors could hold sway over single-family rental homes in the United States in the future; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief, private equity firms have been increasingly penetrating the residential property market. This growing involvement of private equity in the residential property market has sparked concerns regarding its influence on housing prices and the affordability to individual homebuyers in Door County; and

WHEREAS, for May 2025, the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association cites the median home sale price in the State of Wisconsin as \$330,000, and the median home sale price in Door County as \$442,400. The United States Census Bureau has documented that the median household income (in 2023 dollars), 2019-2023 for Door County is \$71,785, with 8.8% of Door County residents living in poverty; and

WHEREAS, Door County recognizes the need for exemptions pertaining to local businesses based in Wisconsin that intend to purchase a home for executive or staff housing; and

WHEREAS, clear criteria is needed for exemptions, such as the number of homes a company can purchase, the purpose of the purchase (e.g. executive housing, assisted living facilities), and local economic impact; and

WHEREAS, companies seeking exemptions shall demonstrate how their property purchase will benefit the local community, such as job creation, job retention, economic development, or improved access to healthcare facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby determine that measures be implemented by the Wisconsin State Legislature to stop corporations from purchasing single-family homes in Door County and the State of Wisconsin.

2026 Conference Resolution 3

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Indefinitely postpone.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Bork, second by Hofberger, to indefinitely postpone. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Indefinitely postpone.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

Agriculture, Environment, and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 4

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Walworth County

Relating to

Requesting the Wisconsin Counties Association to Lobby the State Legislature and Governor on Legislation for Greater Local Control for Wisconsin Counties Related to Large Scale Solar and Wind Projects

WHEREAS, local governments in Wisconsin are closest to the people they serve and are best positioned to understand and address the unique needs, priorities, and challenges of their communities; and

WHEREAS, public meetings and hearings held by local units of government allow for significantly more opportunity for public input than meetings and hearings held by the Public Service Commission in Madison; and

WHEREAS, preserving control is essential to maintaining accountability, transparency, and public trust in government as well as ensuring that decisions reflect local values and conditions; and

WHEREAS, statewide, one size fits all regulations do not always appropriately address the issues and needs of every Wisconsin community; and

WHEREAS, a series of mandates and other agency actions have continuously shifted powers from the local to the state level; and

WHEREAS, the geographic, environmental, and demographic diversity across Wisconsin counties necessitates localized approaches to governance that reflect each county's unique characteristics; and

WHEREAS, state legislators have been making attempts to return local control to cities, villages and towns over large-scale wind and solar projects in several bills; and

WHEREAS, such attempts should also be applied to counties and county boards who are democratically elected bodies that directly represent the interests and values of their constituents; and

2026 Conference Resolution 4

WHEREAS, significant negative impacts on environmental habitats, public health, road infrastructure, and property values and taxes due to large-scale wind and solar projects in those areas where they exist are well established and documented; and

WHEREAS, agriculture in our county and across the state is a significant and leading industry so much so that Farmland Preservation is an actively pursued item within Walworth County's Comprehensive Plan and across the state, and agricultural land must be protected for current and future needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby request the Wisconsin State Legislature and Governor to support any and all efforts and legislation that would give local elected bodies greater control in regulating large scale wind and solar projects in the best interest of their communities.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Okey, second by Stene, to refer to the Board of Directors. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Refer to the Board of Directors.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

Agriculture, Environment and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 5

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by
Barron County

Relating to

Supporting the Regulation of Wakesurfing

WHEREAS, the Barron County Extension/Land Conservation Committee met on Tuesday April 7, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Pat Brown, Barron County Lakeshore Technician, provided information to the Committee regarding this Bill and spoke in favor of a resolution in support of AB 1033; and

WHEREAS, County Administrator French spoke with Wisconsin Counties Association staff on March 12, 2026 and WCA staff indicated their support for AB 1033; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Counties Association's Annual Meeting is September 20-22, 2026 at the Kalahari Resorts and Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells; and

WHEREAS, 2025 Assembly Bill 1033, February 9, 2026 – Introduced by Representative Brooks, co-sponsored by Senator Feyen was referred to Committee on State Affairs; and

WHEREAS, this legislation is an act to regulate wakesurfing. The bill defines “wakesurfing” as surfing a motorboat’s wake, regardless of whether the person is being pulled by a tow rope attached to the motorboat that is producing the wake, or operating a motorboat in a manner that creates a wake that is, or is intended to be, surfed by another person”; and

WHEREAS, AB 1033 is a legislative mechanism to begin controlling wakesurfing so as to preserve Wisconsin’s inland lakes and to reduce shoreline erosion as well as providing for boater safety measures.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support the passage of this resolution from the Barron County Board of Supervisors that would support the passage of 2025 Assembly Bill 1033; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association further supports:

- a. The right for Towns, Cities and Villages to enact and enforce a local ordinance more restrictive than AB 1033.

2026 Conference Resolution 5

- b. That enforcement efforts correlating to the spirit and intent of AB 1033 be undertaken by the Wisconsin DNR and local Sheriff's Departments.
- c. Three Hundred (300) foot shoreline setback.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Indefinitely postpone.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Stene, second by Clendenning, to indefinitely postpone. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Indefinitely postpone.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

Agriculture, Environment, and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 6

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Bayfield County

Relating to

Supporting County Innovation in Alternative Funding Sources Through the Establishment of Public Private Partnership Statutes in Wisconsin

WHEREAS, Wisconsin counties are experiencing sustained pressure on property tax levies due to rising costs in public safety, transportation, human services, and infrastructure maintenance; and

WHEREAS, counties are increasingly limited in their ability to meet public expectations while remaining within levy constraints imposed by state law and structural revenue limitations; and

WHEREAS, counties are often required to rely heavily on property taxes as the primary local revenue source, despite providing services that benefit regional economies, the state system, and nonresident users; and

WHEREAS, counties are creatures of statute, powers must be granted or implied providing clear authority, and

WHEREAS, innovative public private partnership (P3) financing approaches have demonstrated potential to improve long-term fiscal sustainability, and reduce reliance on property taxes while maintaining or improving service levels; and

WHEREAS, current Wisconsin State Law allows a variety of solicited transportation, procurement and other programmatic P3 proposals; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated P3 statute that allows counties to enter into this type of arrangement could enable new types of housing, energy and broadband projects while preserving public ownership and generating recurring income; and

WHEREAS, other P3 examples include: revenue sharing infrastructure concessions, county led development corporations with private equity participation, land redevelopment partnerships, public private utilities and long-term operating agreements for public assets; and

2026 Conference Resolution 6

WHEREAS, statutory changes providing clear authority could increase private sector involvement, financing flexibility (alternatives to levy based borrowing) and ownership opportunities allowing for entrepreneurial / private operation of public facilities; and

WHEREAS, counties would be better positioned to implement policies like these if supported with specific statutory guidance; and

WHEREAS, encouraging P3 innovation aligns with the shared goals of local control, taxpayer relief, and sustainable service delivery across Wisconsin's counties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby advocate for formal statewide Public Private Partnership statutes that support diversification of revenue sources beyond property taxes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association advocate for state policies, statutory adjustments, and programmatic support that enable counties to pursue public-private partnerships.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Seefeldt, second by Frohling, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

I.D.63. Support formal statewide Public Private Partnership statutes that support diversification of revenue sources beyond property taxes; and advocate for state policies, statutory adjustments, and programmatic support that enable counties to pursue public-private partnerships.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 7

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Walworth County

Relating to

Supporting Wisconsin Establishing a Membership with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to Cover the Cost of Membership for all State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (SLTT) Organizations

WHEREAS, the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) provides vital cybersecurity services, including 24/7 threat monitoring and incident response, to more than 18,000 state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) government organizations supporting our nation's critical infrastructure including public hospitals, public utilities, K-12 schools, and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, local governments, especially in rural and under-resourced areas, have relied heavily on MS-ISAC's services; and

WHEREAS, without MS-ISAC services, government organizations are increasingly vulnerable to cyber attacks by foreign adversaries; and

WHEREAS, recent federal funding cuts to MS-ISAC have significantly weakened the nations defense against cyber threats; and

WHEREAS, Walworth County joined MS-ISAC under the Single Organization Membership option when funding ended to continue the services the County needed to protect its infrastructure and data; and

WHEREAS, all local governments will be better served and protected if all local governments participate in MS-ISAC because Wisconsin local governments are only as strong as their weakest link.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support Wisconsin establishing membership with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to cover the cost of membership for all state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) organizations.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

2026 Conference Resolution 7

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Okey, second by Olson, to adopt Resolutions 7 and 8. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

I.D.64. Support the State of Wisconsin establishing/purchasing membership with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to cover the cost of membership for all state, local, tribal and territorial (SLTT) organizations.

General Government and Finance

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 8

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Barron County

Relating to

Supporting Wisconsin Establishing a Membership with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to Cover the Cost of Membership for all State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT) Organizations

WHEREAS, the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) provides vital cybersecurity services, including 24/7 threat monitoring and incident response, to more than 18,000 state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) government organizations supporting our nation's critical infrastructure including public hospitals, public utilities, K-12 schools and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, local governments, especially in rural and under-resourced areas, have relied heavily on MS-ISAC's services; and

WHEREAS, without MS-ISAC services, government organizations are increasingly vulnerable to cyber-attacks by foreign adversaries; and

WHEREAS, recent federal funding cuts to MS-ISAC have significantly weakened the nation's defense against cyber threats.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support Wisconsin establishing a membership with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to cover the cost of membership for all state, local, tribal and territorial (SLTT) organizations.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Okey, second by Olson, to adopt Resolutions 7 and 8. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 Conference Resolution 8

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

I.D.64. Support the State of Wisconsin establishing/purchasing membership with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to cover the cost of membership for all state, local, tribal and territorial (SLTT) organizations.

General Government and Finance

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 9

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Wood County

Relating to

Supporting Sustainable State Funding for Local Public Health Departments

WHEREAS, in Wisconsin, local health departments (LHDs) are legally required to provide a core set of public health services under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 251 and Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DHS 140; and

WHEREAS, responsibilities of LHDs have expanded significantly in recent years due to emerging public health threats, workforce shortages, and increasing community health needs; and

WHEREAS, local health departments rely significantly on a combination of limited state aids, categorical grants, and local property tax levy to fund these mandated services; and

WHEREAS, current state funding mechanisms for public health are largely outdated, not indexed to inflation, and do not reflect the true cost of delivering foundational public health services; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin currently ranks 49th lowest in state dollars dedicated to public health per person (https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/PH_funding); and

WHEREAS, public health initiatives consistently deliver high returns on investment (ROI), with recent data showing a median ROI of 14.3 to 1, often saving \$14 in medical and societal costs for every \$1 spent (<https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2025/07/08/public-health-initiatives-deliver-big-returns-on-investment>); and

WHEREAS, reliance on short-term, restricted, or competitive grant funding creates instability and limits long-term planning; and

WHEREAS, counties bear a disproportionate share of the financial burden for providing foundational public health services, placing additional pressure on local property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, a strong and adequately funded public health system is essential to protect the health, safety, and economic stability of Wisconsin residents and communities.

2026 Conference Resolution 9

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support continuing to build and retain public health infrastructure through increased and flexible funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such a funding model should:

- Provide increased General Purpose Revenue (GPR) support for local health departments
- Include automatic inflationary adjustments
- Allow for flexible use of funds to meet local needs
- Reduce reliance on short-term, restricted, and/or competitive grants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Wisconsin recognizes public health as a core governmental function and prioritizes sustained investment to ensure consistent service delivery across all jurisdictions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association advocate for policies that reduce the reliance on local property tax levy to fund foundational public health services.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Stene, to adopt Resolutions 9 and 10. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

III.E.1.e. Support continuing to build and retain public health infrastructure through increased and flexible funding. Such a funding model should:

- Provide increased General Purpose Revenue (GPR) support for local health departments
- Include automatic inflationary adjustments
- Allow for flexible use of funds to meet local needs
- Reduce reliance on short-term, restricted, and/or competitive grants; and

III.E.1.f. Support policies that reduce reliance on the local property tax levy to fund foundational public health services.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 10

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Eau Claire County

Relating to

Supporting State Funding for Local Public Health Departments

WHEREAS, in Wisconsin, local health departments (LHDs) are legally required to provide a core set of public health services under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 251 and Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DHS 140; and

WHEREAS, responsibilities of LHDs have expanded significantly in recent years due to emerging public health threats, workforce shortages, and increasing community health needs; and

WHEREAS, local health departments rely heavily on a combination of limited state aids, categorical grants, and local property tax levy to fund these mandated services; and

WHEREAS, current state funding mechanisms for public health are largely outdated, not indexed to inflation, and do not reflect the true cost of delivering foundational public health services; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin currently ranks 49th lowest in state dollars dedicated to public health per person; and

WHEREAS, public health initiatives consistently deliver high returns on investment (ROI), with recent data showing a median ROI of 14.3 to 1, often saving \$14 in medical and societal costs for every \$1 spent; and

WHEREAS, reliance on short-term, restricted, or competitive grant funding creates instability and limits long-term planning; and

WHEREAS, local municipalities including cities and counties bear a disproportionate share of the financial burden for providing foundational public health services, placing additional pressure on local property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, a strong and adequately funded public health system is essential to protect the health, safety, and economic stability of Wisconsin residents and communities.

2026 Conference Resolution 10

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support continuing to build and retain public health infrastructure through increased and flexible funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such a funding model should:

- Provide increased Wisconsin General Purpose Revenue (GPR) support for local health departments
- Include automatic inflationary adjustments
- Allow for flexible use of funds to meet local needs
- Reduce reliance on short-term, restricted, and/or competitive grants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Wisconsin recognizes public health as a core governmental function and prioritizes sustained investment to ensure consistent service delivery across all jurisdictions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association advocates for policies that reduce the reliance on local property tax levy to fund mandated and foundational public health services.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Stene, to adopt Resolutions 9 and 10. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

III.E.1.e. Support continuing to build and retain public health infrastructure through increased and flexible funding. Such a funding model should:

- Provide increased General Purpose Revenue (GPR) support for local health departments
- Include automatic inflationary adjustments
- Allow for flexible use of funds to meet local needs
- Reduce reliance on short-term, restricted, and/or competitive grants; and

III.E.1.f. Support policies that reduce reliance on the local property tax levy to fund foundational public health services.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 11

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Walworth County

Relating to

Supporting Legislation Regarding Volunteer Drivers' Insurance Coverage

WHEREAS, volunteer drivers are an essential component of Wisconsin's aging and disability network and human service programs; and

WHEREAS, volunteer drivers are being told by their insurance carriers that they will be dropped, not renewed, or face dramatically increased costs because they volunteer their time and accept mileage reimbursement for their expenses; and

WHEREAS, a Wisconsin volunteer driver program survey conducted by the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR), found that 34.3% of statewide volunteer driver programs lost volunteer drivers due to insurance rate increases or coverage denials and 31.3% reported volunteers had to switch insurers or decline reimbursement to continue volunteer driving; and

WHEREAS, GWAAR is a nonprofit agency committed to supporting the successful delivery of aging programs and services in 70 counties and 11 tribes in Wisconsin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support legislation regarding protecting volunteer drivers' insurance coverage.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Stene, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

III.K.20. Support legislation protecting volunteer drivers' insurance coverage.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 12

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Polk County

Relating to

Supporting Positive, Prevention-Focused Community Messaging

WHEREAS, the health, safety, and well-being of our community members, especially our youth, are of the utmost importance; and

WHEREAS, community messages and media displays play an influential role in shaping perceptions, behaviors, and social norms around substance use; and

WHEREAS, prevention-focused, fact-based public education has been shown to reduce substance misuse and strengthen protective factors such as family connection, school engagement, and community support; and

WHEREAS, the Northwoods Coalition, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, local law enforcement, and local partners continue to lead important efforts to prevent substance misuse and promote recovery, resilience, and hope; and

WHEREAS, public messaging that normalizes and trivializes illegal drug use can undermine these prevention efforts and confuse or mislead people, especially young people, in the community about the real risks associated with substance use; and

WHEREAS, this body affirms the importance of collaboration among families, schools, health care providers, law enforcement, and community organizations to foster a culture of prevention, wellness, and positive decision making.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby encourage all community partners, advertisers, and property owners to promote messages that support prevention, recovery, and healthy lifestyles, and to avoid content that may intentionally or unintentionally normalize or glamorize illegal drug use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association invites the Northwoods Coalition, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and local prevention coalitions to collaborate on a proactive public messaging campaign focused on hope, resilience, and healthy choices.

2026 Conference Resolution 12

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Hurd, second by Seefeldt, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

III.K.20. Support state and local cooperation on a proactive public messaging campaign focused on hope, resilience, and healthy choices.

Health and Human Services

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 13

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Walworth County

Relating to

Urging the State Legislature to Support the Department of Health Services SNAP Funding Request as Part of AB 387/SB 390

WHEREAS, the federal budget reconciliation package enacted in July of 2025, makes changes to the SNAP (FoodShare) program that reduces federal costs and significantly impacts county-administered services; and

WHEREAS, these changes extend SNAP work requirements to individuals up to age 64, lower the child age threshold for parent exemptions, and eliminate waivers for areas with high unemployment, thereby increasing referrals to the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program and workload for county human services departments; and

WHEREAS, the legislation requires states to contribute a minimum of 5% toward the cost of SNAP benefits if their error rate is 6% or higher, facing funding penalties of between 5% and 15% of total SNAP costs; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's current SNAP payment error rate is 4.47%, but without additional investment in eligibility and administrative systems, heightened workloads could push the state above the 6% threshold, triggering significant penalties; and

WHEREAS, if Wisconsin's error rate reaches 6% on or after October 1, 2027, the state's 5% cost share would be approximately \$69 million annually, with potential penalty payments increasing the state's financial burden-costs that could ultimately cascade down to counties; and

WHEREAS, the SNAP administrative match rate for Income Maintenance (IM) activities has been reduced from the previous 50% federal / 50% state-local to 25% federal / 75% state-local, substantially reducing federal revenue available to counties to administer SNAP; and

WHEREAS, the reduction in administrative funds could lead to a reduction in IM staff, potentially leading to increased error rates; and

WHEREAS, county IM administrative costs are approximately \$123 million annually, with SNAP related workload accounting for about \$49 million of those costs; and

2026 Conference Resolution 13

WHEREAS, the new administrative match rate results in an estimated \$17 million annual loss in SNAP administrative funding to counties; and

WHEREAS, for Walworth County, we project funding decreases of \$154,561 in 2026 and \$618,244 in 2027; and

WHEREAS, counties operate under state-imposed property tax levy limits, restricting their ability to offset such funding losses without additional state or federal relief; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin 2025 AB 387 and SB 390 are correction bills for 2025 Wisconsin Act 15 that offer the legislature an opportunity to propose and adopt changes to the recently passed biennial budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the State of Wisconsin to provide funding to offset the county fiscal impact caused by the enacted federal SNAP changes, and to work with counties to ensure adequate resources for the administration of FoodShare and related programs.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Stene, to adopt Resolutions 13-15. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

III.G.11. Support additional state funding to counties to offset the county fiscal impact caused by the enacted federal SNAP changes, and urge the State to work with counties to ensure adequate resources for the administration of FoodShare and related programs.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 14

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Polk County

Relating to

Requesting Funding and Additional Support from the State of Wisconsin to Offset the Cost of Federal SNAP Program Changes

WHEREAS, the federal budget reconciliation package enacted in July of 2025, makes changes to the SNAP (FoodShare) program that would reduce federal costs and significantly impact county-administered services; and

WHEREAS, these changes extend SNAP work requirements to individuals up to age 64, lower the child age threshold for parent exemptions, and eliminate waivers for areas with high unemployment, thereby increasing referrals to the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program and workload for county human service departments; and

WHEREAS, the legislation requires states to contribute a minimum of 5% toward the cost of SNAP benefits if their error rate is 6% or higher, facing penalty funding of between 5% and 15% of total SNAP costs; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's current SNAP payment error rate is 4.47%, but without additional investment in eligibility and administrative systems, heightened workloads could push the state above the 6% threshold, triggering significant penalties; and

WHEREAS, if Wisconsin's error rate reaches 6% on or after October 1, 2027, the state's 5% cost share would be approximately \$69 million annually, with potential penalty payments increasing the state's financial burden—costs that could ultimately cascade down to counties; and

WHEREAS, the SNAP administrative match rate for Income Maintenance (IM) activities has been reduced from the previous 50% federal / 50% state-local to 25% federal / 75% state-local, substantially reducing federal revenue available to counties to administer SNAP; and

WHEREAS, the reduction in administrative funds could lead to a reduction in IM staff, which could result in an increased payment error rate; and

WHEREAS, county IM administrative costs are approximately \$123 million annually, with SNAP-related workload accounting for about \$49 million of those costs; and

2026 Conference Resolution 14

WHEREAS, the new administrative match rate results in an estimated \$17 million annual loss in SNAP administrative funding to counties; and

WHEREAS, these federal cuts result from shifting the benefit and administrative costs to states and counties (reducing resources available for local administration), tightening work requirements (increasing county workload), and penalizing minor payment errors (resulting in more cost to the states); and

WHEREAS, counties operate under state-imposed property tax levy limits, restricting their ability to offset such funding losses without additional state or federal relief.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the State of Wisconsin to provide funding to offset the county fiscal impact caused by the enacted federal SNAP changes, and to work with counties to ensure adequate resources for the administration of FoodShare and related programs.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Stene, to adopt Resolutions 13-15. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

III.G.11. Support additional state funding to counties to offset the county fiscal impact caused by the enacted federal SNAP changes, and urge the State to work with counties to ensure adequate resources for the administration of FoodShare and related programs.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 15

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Outagamie County

Relating to

Urging the State of Wisconsin to Provide Funding to Offset the County Fiscal Impact Caused by the Enacted Federal SNAP Changes

WHEREAS, the federal budget reconciliation package enacted in July of 2025, makes changes to the SNAP (FoodShare) program that would reduce federal costs and significantly impact county-administered services. These changes extend SNAP work requirements to individuals up to age 64, lower the child age threshold for parent exemptions, and eliminate waivers for areas with high unemployment, thereby increasing referrals to the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program and workload for county human service departments; and

WHEREAS, the legislation requires states to contribute a minimum of 5% toward the cost of SNAP benefits if their error rate is 6% or higher, facing penalty funding of between 5% and 15% of total SNAP costs. Wisconsin's current SNAP payment error rate is 4.47%, but without additional investment in eligibility and administrative systems, heightened workloads could push the state above the 6% threshold, triggering significant penalties. If Wisconsin's error rate reaches 6% on or after October 1, 2027, the state's 5% cost share would be approximately \$69 million annually, with potential penalty payments increasing the state's financial burden—costs that could ultimately cascade down to counties; and

WHEREAS, the SNAP administrative match rate for Income Maintenance (IM) activities has been reduced from the previous 50% federal / 50% state-local to 25% federal / 75% state-local, substantially reducing federal revenue available to counties to administer SNAP. The reduction in administrative funds could lead to a reduction in IM staff, which could result in an increased payment error rate. County IM administrative costs are approximately \$123 million annually, with SNAP-related workload accounting for about \$49 million of those costs. The new administrative match rate results in an estimated \$17 million annual loss in SNAP administrative funding to counties; and

WHEREAS, these federal cuts result from shifting the benefit and administrative costs to states and counties (reducing resources available for local administration), tightening work requirements (increasing county workload), and penalizing minor payment errors (resulting in more cost to the states); and

2026 Conference Resolution 15

WHEREAS, counties operate under state-imposed property tax levy limits, restricting their ability to offset such funding losses without additional state or federal relief.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the State of Wisconsin to provide funding to offset the county fiscal impact caused by the enacted federal SNAP changes, and to work with counties to ensure adequate resources for the administration of FoodShare and related programs.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Stene, to adopt Resolutions 13-15. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

III.G.11. Support additional state funding to counties to offset the county fiscal impact caused by the enacted federal SNAP changes, and urge the State to work with counties to ensure adequate resources for the administration of FoodShare and related programs.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 16

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Waushara County

Relating to

Urging the Wisconsin Legislature to Expand the Definition of "Forfeiture Expenses" Under Wis. Stat. § 961.55 to Include Drug-Related Treatment, Diversion, and Law Enforcement Program Costs

WHEREAS, Wisconsin Statute § 961.55 permits law enforcement agencies to retain up to 50 percent of drug-related forfeiture proceeds to pay "forfeiture expenses," which are currently defined narrowly as the proper expenses of the proceedings for forfeiture and sale, including expenses of seizure, maintenance of custody, advertising, court costs, and the costs of investigation and prosecution reasonably incurred; and

WHEREAS, the remaining proceeds from drug-related forfeitures under state law are deposited into the Wisconsin Common School Fund pursuant to Article X, Section 2 of the Wisconsin Constitution, leaving no mechanism for counties to direct forfeiture proceeds toward programs that directly address the causes and consequences of drug-related criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin counties bear significant financial responsibility for operating treatment courts, funding treatment court probation officers and human services workers assigned to drug-related cases, and providing continuing education for Health and Human Services employees involved in substance abuse diversion and treatment programs—all of which are direct operational costs of processing, adjudicating, and resolving drug-related offenses; and

WHEREAS, treatment courts are a proven, cost-effective alternative to incarceration for non-violent, drug-involved individuals, reducing recidivism and long-term criminal justice costs, and their continued operation depends on stable, adequate funding for program administration, case management, and judicial oversight; and

WHEREAS, county law enforcement agencies incur substantial costs for undercover surveillance equipment, electronic tracking equipment, Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) training, and Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) training—all of which are essential tools and competencies for the investigation and prosecution of drug-related offenses; and

WHEREAS, the current narrow definition of "forfeiture expenses" fails to reflect the full range of costs directly incurred by counties in investigating, prosecuting, and providing court-

2026 Conference Resolution 16

ordered dispositions for drug-related offenses, leaving counties unable to use seized drug proceeds for programs that are integral to the drug case continuum from arrest through successful treatment completion; and

WHEREAS, an expanded definition of "forfeiture expenses" would remain within the existing 50 percent cap established under Wis. Stat. § 961.55(5)(b), ensuring the Common School Fund continues to receive a meaningful share of forfeiture proceeds consistent with the Wisconsin Supreme Court's 1973 ruling regarding Article X, Section 2 of the Wisconsin Constitution; and

WHEREAS, allowing counties to reinvest drug forfeiture proceeds into the treatment, diversion, and enforcement programs that directly arise from drug-related criminal activity reflects sound public policy, promotes fiscal responsibility, and advances the goals of public safety and community wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) serves as the foremost voice of county officials representing all 72 counties in Wisconsin and is well-positioned to advocate before the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor for statutory changes that reduce unfunded burdens on county governments.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the Wisconsin Legislature to amend Wis. Stat. § 961.55 to expand the definition of "forfeiture expenses" to expressly include the following costs when directly incurred in connection with the prosecution or court-ordered disposition of drug-related offenses:

1. Costs of operating treatment court programs, including program administration and judicial oversight.
2. Salaries and associated costs for county treatment court ~~probation officers~~ employees assigned to drug-related cases.
3. Salaries and associated costs for ~~human services~~ workers assigned to drug-related cases and treatment court participants.
4. Continuing education and training expenses for ~~Health and Human Services~~ employees involved in substance abuse diversion and treatment programs.
5. Purchase and maintenance of undercover surveillance equipment used in drug-related investigations.
6. Purchase and maintenance of electronic tracking equipment used in drug-related investigations.
7. Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) training and Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) training for law enforcement officers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association advocate before the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor for passage of legislation amending Wis. Stat. § 961.55 consistent with the foregoing, and that WCA request the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Council analyze the constitutional parameters of such an expansion to ensure that the

2026 Conference Resolution 16

Common School Fund continues to receive a meaningful share of forfeiture proceeds consistent with Article X, Section 2 of the Wisconsin Constitution and applicable Wisconsin Supreme Court precedent.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Move to amend the resolved clause as follows:

Number 2: add the word "county" in front of treatment; delete "probation officers" and replace with "employees".

Number 3: Delete "human services".

Number 4: Delete "Health and Human Services".

Adopt as amended.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Frohling, second by Bork, to adopt.

Motion by Tryggestad, second by Koch, to amend the resolved clause as follows:

Number 2: add the word "county" in front of treatment; delete "probation officers" and replace with "employees".

Number 3: Delete "human services".

Number 4: Delete "Health and Human Services".

Motion carried. Resolution adopted as amended.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt as amended by the Resolutions Committee.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

IV.I.10. Support legislation that amends Wis. Stat. § 961.55 to expand the definition of "forfeiture expenses" to expressly include the following costs when directly incurred in connection with the prosecution or court-ordered disposition of drug-related offenses:

1. Costs of operating treatment court programs, including program administration and judicial oversight.
2. Salaries and associated costs for county treatment court employees assigned to drug-related cases.
3. Salaries and associated costs for workers assigned to drug-related cases and treatment court participants.
4. Continuing education and training expenses for employees involved in substance abuse diversion and treatment programs.
5. Purchase and maintenance of undercover surveillance equipment used in drug-related investigations.
6. Purchase and maintenance of electronic tracking equipment used in drug-related investigations.

2026 Conference Resolution 16

7. Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) training and Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) training for law enforcement officers.

Judicial and Public Safety

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 17

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Jefferson County

Relating to

Requesting that Wis. Stat. § 66.0602(3)(e)(6) be Amended to Apply the Levy-Limit Exception to Countywide EMS, Fire, and Integrated Fire/EMS Services

WHEREAS, Jefferson County and communities across Wisconsin are witnessing increasing operational costs for emergency response services due to factors such as rising call volumes, personnel shortages, and the need for modernized equipment and facilities; and

WHEREAS, many communities are facing a persistent decline in volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel, contributing to staffing strain, longer response times, and reliance on mutual-aid agreements; and

WHEREAS, these pressures have accelerated a statewide shift toward more integrated Fire/EMS service models, which require stable, predictable, long-term funding mechanisms to ensure readiness and response capacity; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 66.0602(3)(e)(6) currently authorizes a levy-limit exemption exclusively for countywide EMS services; and

WHEREAS, expanding this provision to include countywide fire and combined Fire/EMS services would enhance the ability of counties to coordinate service delivery, improve system sustainability, and create stronger regional models that adapt to changing community needs; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson County is evaluating options to support EMS operations on a long term, countywide basis, and statutory flexibility is essential for future planning and intergovernmental coordination; and

WHEREAS, ensuring high-quality emergency response is a matter of public safety, public health, and community resilience, and counties must be equipped with modern tools to support these critical services; and

WHEREAS, while local input is vital, statewide uniformity remains a critical goal to ensure predictability, fairness, and consistency for both agricultural producers and regulatory bodies.

2026 Conference Resolution 17

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby respectfully request that the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor amend Wis. Stat. § 66.0602(3)(e)(6) to extend the levy limit exemption to countywide fire services, countywide emergency medical services, and integrated countywide Fire/EMS systems.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Judicial and Public Safety: Adopt.

General Government and Finance: Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Koch, second by Seefeldt, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VI.G.19. Support an amendment to Wis. Stat. § 66.0602(3)(e)(6) to extend the levy limit exemption to countywide fire services, countywide emergency medical services, and integrated countywide Fire/EMS systems.

Judicial and Public Safety
General Government and Finance

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 18

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Burnett County

Relating to

Opposing State Public Defender Rates

WHEREAS, Wisconsin State Statute 977.02(9) sets forth the manner in which the State Public Defender Board may set rates for copies in discovery in criminal cases; and

WHEREAS, rates have been set by the State Public Defender, who serves a five-year term, for over the last 15 years and not the Board as specified in Statute; and

WHEREAS, the rates have only been noticed to District Attorneys via email and not to the counties who bear the costs of producing the documents; and

WHEREAS, the Public Defender's office may shift money in the budget to other line items thereby depleting the funds needed to pay for discovery; and

WHEREAS, payments to counties for discovery materials have steadily declined and are being further reduced; and

WHEREAS, Burnett County and all Wisconsin Counties will have costs increased by this action; and

WHEREAS, there is no legislative oversight in this matter; and

WHEREAS, the State Public Defender, in arbitrarily setting dollar amounts, appears to be in violation of Statute 977.02(9).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby oppose such actions and encourages statewide action to change this practice.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Olson, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 Conference Resolution 18

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

IV.C.4.k. Support full and fair reimbursement to counties for discovery costs from the state public defender's office.

Judicial and Public Safety

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 19

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Polk County

Relating to

Affirming Support of Legislation to Establish Third Branch of Polk County Circuit Court

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2014, the Polk County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No 30-14 in support of proposed legislation to create additional judgeships, including the establishment of a third circuit court in Polk County; and

WHEREAS, on September 19, 2017, the Polk County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No 61-17 in support of proposed legislation to create additional judgeships, including the establishment of a third circuit court in Polk County; and

WHEREAS, there are currently two bills proposed in the Wisconsin legislature, 2025 Senate Bill 546 and 2025 Assembly Bill 514, that address judicial needs among several Wisconsin Counties but that do not currently address the judicial need in Polk County; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 Polk County ranked near the top of the list for judicial need in the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the Director of State Courts of the Wisconsin Supreme Court reported in the 2016 Weighted Case Load Study that there was a continuing need for three judges in Polk County; and

WHEREAS, the Director of State Courts of the Wisconsin Supreme Court is in the process of completing another Weighted Case Load Study which, based on the current overload of cases the two existing Polk County Circuit Court branches currently have, it is anticipated it will show Polk County as one of the top counties in need for an additional judgeship; and

WHEREAS, Polk County is currently authorized for two circuit court judges, while the growth rate of case filings in Polk County has warranted three judges since at least 2014; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin will pay the salary and benefits for the judge and their court reporter in addition to providing the needed computers and printers, while additional support may be requested of the county; and

2026 Conference Resolution 19

WHEREAS, the Polk County Judicial Center has the prerequisite third courtroom available for a third circuit court judge, together with sufficient room for necessary accompanying support personnel; and

WHEREAS, the support of the Polk County Board of Supervisors is required for the Director of Court's Office to include Polk County in a judgeship bill to create a third circuit branch.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support legislation creating additional judgeships ~~and hereby urges the Wisconsin Legislature and Governor Tony Evers for an amendment of, and subsequent approval of, the currently proposed legislation to include the creation of a third branch of the Circuit Court of Polk County to better serve the needs of the citizens of Polk County.~~

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Amend to delete the following language from the resolved clause: and hereby urges the Wisconsin Legislature and Governor Tony Evers for an amendment of, and subsequent approval of, the currently proposed legislation to include the creation of a third branch of the Circuit Court of Polk County to better serve the needs of the citizens of Polk County. Adopt as amended.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Koch, second by Depperman, to adopt. Motion by Gomez-Tom, second by Bork, to amend to delete the following language from the resolved clause: and hereby urges the Wisconsin Legislature and Governor Tony Evers for an amendment of, and subsequent approval of, the currently proposed legislation to include the creation of a third branch of the Circuit Court of Polk County to better serve the needs of the citizens of Polk County. Motion carried. Resolution adopted as amended.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt as amended by the Resolutions Committee.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

IV.C.1.m. Support legislation creating additional judgeships.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 20

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Outagamie County

Relating to

Supporting Proposed Legislation that Would Ensure that Individuals and Businesses Throughout the State of Wisconsin Have Quick and Easy Access to Emergency Aid When Needed

WHEREAS, individual assistance programs are critical to helping residents and businesses recover after disasters by providing support such as emergency housing, home repairs, and financial aid. Wisconsin currently lacks a State-funded disaster assistance program, leaving many survivors reliant on limited federal resources and creating gaps in recovery. This resolution supports proposed legislation to establish a state disaster relief fund, ensuring faster, more accessible assistance for individuals and businesses impacted by disasters across Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, individual assistance programs for citizens and businesses following a disaster are vital to the well-being and stability of communities, providing crucial support to families and industries during times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, these programs, which may include but are not limited to emergency housing assistance, home assistance/repairs, housing, and financial support, are essential for addressing the immediate and long-term needs of residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, no State funding currently exists to help disaster victims in Wisconsin, and they are often left behind after disasters due to less accessible federal aid; and

WHEREAS, several other states have addressed this issue by creating a state fund for disaster relief; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has put forth Assembly Bill 580 and Senate Bill 558 to create a state fund for individuals and businesses to be able to apply for aid following being impacted by an event.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support proposed legislation that would ensure that individuals and businesses throughout the State of Wisconsin will have quick and easy access to emergency aid when needed.

2026 Conference Resolution 20

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Koch, to adopt.

Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

IV.A.4. Support legislation that ensures that individuals and businesses affected by a disaster have quick and easy access to emergency aid when needed through the creation of an individual assistance program.

Judicial and Public Safety

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 21

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Bayfield County

Relating to

Supporting a State-Local Fleet Efficiency and Public Safety Operations Cost Stabilization Program

WHEREAS, county governments in Wisconsin are responsible for providing essential public safety services including law enforcement, emergency response, and related operations that require continuous vehicle use and significant fuel/energy consumption, exceeding 20% of many county budgets; and

WHEREAS, fuel and fleet operating costs represent a substantial and growing share of county public safety budgets, and are subject to volatility that directly impacts the ability of counties to maintain consistent service levels within levy limits; and

WHEREAS, rural counties in particular face higher per-service delivery costs due to geographic size, patrol distance, and limited economies of scale due to small populations, creating structural disparities in the cost of providing comparable public safety services across the state; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin counties are experiencing increased pressure on operational budgets due to inflationary energy costs, which can result in reduced patrol mileage, deferred fleet replacement, and other service limitations; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has a compelling interest in ensuring stable, equitable, and efficient delivery of public safety services across all counties regardless of geography or population density; and

WHEREAS, advancements in vehicle efficiency, hybrid technology, and electric vehicle deployment present opportunities to reduce long-term operating costs, though adoption varies significantly by jurisdiction based on infrastructure availability and operational requirements; and

WHEREAS, a performance-based approach that incentivizes fleet efficiency can encourage modernization while improving long-term fiscal sustainability for both state and local government law enforcement; and

2026 Conference Resolution 21

WHEREAS, a tiered or benchmark-based reimbursement model tied to vehicle efficiency or fleet-wide operational performance could encourage counties to adopt efficient vehicles while recognizing operational realities of law enforcement duties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support the creation of a State-Local Public Safety Fleet Efficiency Program that provides financial assistance to counties for law enforcement and public safety fleet energy and fuel costs based on measurable efficiency benchmarks; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such a program should be designed to:

1. Stabilize county public safety budgets against volatile fuel and energy prices;
2. Recognize geographic and operational differences among counties, particularly rural service delivery challenges;
3. Incentivize the adoption of fuel-efficient, hybrid, and electric vehicles where operationally feasible;
4. Provide tiered reimbursement or cost-sharing based on fleet efficiency performance metrics (such as miles per gallon, class-adjusted efficiency, or cost per operational mile); and
5. Avoid unintended penalties for necessary specialized law enforcement vehicles where efficiency gains are limited by operational requirements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association urges the State of Wisconsin to explore leveraging federal infrastructure, energy, and public safety funding sources to support such a program and reduce net state fiscal exposure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association encourages the state to design this program in collaboration with counties to ensure administrative simplicity, equitable access, and alignment with existing fleet replacement cycles and procurement systems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association advocate for state legislative action establishing a long-term, sustainable mechanism to support county public safety fleet efficiency and operational cost stability.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Connors, second by Olson, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

2026 Conference Resolution 21

Caption:

IV.I.10. Support the creation of a State-Local Public Safety Fleet Efficiency Program that provides financial assistance to counties for law enforcement and public safety fleet energy and fuel costs based on measurable efficiency benchmarks. Such a program should be designed to:

1. Stabilize county public safety budgets against volatile fuel and energy prices;
2. Recognize geographic and operational differences among counties, particularly rural service delivery challenges;
3. Incentivize the adoption of fuel-efficient, hybrid, and electric vehicles where operationally feasible;
4. Provide tiered reimbursement or cost-sharing based on fleet efficiency performance metrics (such as miles per gallon, class-adjusted efficiency, or cost per operational mile); and
5. Avoid unintended penalties for necessary specialized law enforcement vehicles where efficiency gains are limited by operational requirements.

Judicial and Public Safety

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 22

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Bayfield County

Relating to

Supporting Inter-County Collaboration and Shared Service Delivery Through County Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils (CJCCs)

WHEREAS, a growing number of Wisconsin counties have established Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils (CJCCs) to improve coordination among courts, law enforcement, jails, human services, and community-based providers; and

WHEREAS, CJCCs across Wisconsin have been effective mechanisms for improving local criminal justice outcomes, supporting diversion programs, and aligning county and state priorities in criminal justice reform and service delivery; and

WHEREAS, the structure, capacity, and service offerings of CJCCs vary significantly from county to county, resulting in uneven access to programming, technical assistance, and evidence-based practices across the state; and

WHEREAS, in many instances, locally developed programs and interventions are underutilized or have limited participation due to small population size, geographic barriers, staffing constraints, or lack of awareness, thereby reducing the potential impact and efficiency of both state and county investments; and

WHEREAS, rural and smaller counties in particular face challenges in sustaining specialized programming such as treatment alternatives, behavioral health interventions, restorative justice programming, and pretrial services due to limited participant pools and workforce capacity; and

WHEREAS, modern communication tools and virtual service delivery platforms now provide practical opportunities for counties to share programming, pool resources, and deliver services collaboratively across jurisdictional boundaries without diminishing local control; and

WHEREAS, inter-county collaboration among CJCCs has the potential to improve program utilization rates, enhance service quality, reduce duplication of effort, and increase the return on investment of state and local criminal justice funding; and

2026 Conference Resolution 22

WHEREAS, additional state support is necessary to facilitate the infrastructure, coordination, and administrative capacity required to implement effective multi-county and virtual program delivery models.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the Wisconsin State Legislature and relevant state agencies to establish and/or expand dedicated funding mechanisms that support inter-county collaborations among county Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils (CJCCs); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such funding should incentivize the development of shared and virtual programming models that allow multiple counties to jointly deliver evidence-based services, including but not limited to diversion programs, treatment alternatives, behavioral health interventions, and pretrial services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these collaborative models be designed to preserve local decision-making authority while increasing efficiency, equity, and access to services across all counties regardless of size or geography.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Stene, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

IV.F.16. Urge the Wisconsin State Legislature and relevant state agencies to establish and/or expand dedicated funding mechanisms that support inter-county collaborations among county Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils (CJCCs); that such funding should incentivize the development of shared and virtual programming models that allow multiple counties to jointly deliver evidence-based services, including but not limited to diversion programs, treatment alternatives, behavioral health interventions, and pretrial services; and that these collaborative models be designed to preserve local decision-making authority while increasing efficiency, equity, and access to services across all counties regardless of size or geography.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 23

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Chippewa County

Relating to

Requesting Authorization from the Wisconsin State Legislature for Wisconsin Counties to Adopt an Additional .5% Sales Tax for Road and Bridge Infrastructure

WHEREAS, Wisconsin counties currently have the statutory authority to adopt a 0.5 percent county sales and use tax; and

WHEREAS, Chippewa County, like many counties across Wisconsin, faces increasing challenges in maintaining, repairing, and improving its road and bridge infrastructure due to rising construction costs, aging transportation assets, and limited revenue options; and

WHEREAS, local governments are responsible for a substantial portion of the state's transportation network, yet existing revenue sources are insufficient to meet long-term infrastructure needs; and

WHEREAS, providing counties with an additional, locally authorized revenue tool would allow them to address critical infrastructure needs without further burdening property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, this resolution seeks statutory authorization from the Wisconsin State Legislature for counties to adopt an additional 0.5 percent sales and use tax, to be approved by each respective county board, with all revenue generated from the additional tax dedicated solely to maintaining, repairing, and improving road and bridge infrastructure within the county; and

WHEREAS, Chippewa County further supports requiring that up to one-half of the revenue from any such additional 0.5 percent county sales and use tax be shared with municipalities within the county, to ensure that transportation improvements occur throughout the entire local road network; and

WHEREAS, Chippewa County is committed to working with legislative and municipal partners to determine an equitable manner to distribute the funds to local municipalities; and

2026 Conference Resolution 23

WHEREAS, Chippewa County views the most appropriate final approval of an additional 0.50% sales tax before implementation would be through a referendum vote taken by Chippewa County residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby respectfully request that the Wisconsin Legislature enact legislation granting Wisconsin counties the authority to adopt an additional 0.5 percent county sales and use tax, in addition to the existing 0.5 percent currently authorized by statute, with the following parameters:

- The additional 0.5 percent sales tax may be adopted by county ordinance with approval of the county board.
- All revenue generated from the additional 0.5 percent sales tax must be used exclusively for road and bridge maintenance, repair, and improvement within the county.
- Up to one-half of all revenue generated must be distributed to municipalities within the county.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Transportation and Public Works: Adopt.
General Government and Finance: Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Hofberger, second by Depperman, to adopt. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VI.B.26. Support legislation granting Wisconsin counties the authority to adopt an additional 0.5 percent county sales and use tax, in addition to the existing 0.5 percent currently authorized by statute, with the following parameters:

- The additional 0.5 percent sales tax may be adopted by county ordinance with approval of the county board.
- All revenue generated from the additional 0.5 percent sales tax must be used exclusively for road and bridge maintenance, repair, and improvement within the county.
- Up to one-half of all revenue generated must be distributed to municipalities within the county.

Transportation and Public Works
General Government and Finance

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 24

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Bayfield County

Relating to

Supporting the Removal of Wisconsin State Sales and Use Taxes on Materials Used in Public Road Construction and Maintenance Projects

WHEREAS, road construction and maintenance costs represent the second greatest expenditure category for county governments, second only to wages and personnel costs; and

WHEREAS, road infrastructure is a top priority of residents; and

WHEREAS, unlike many other county purchases that are exempt from Wisconsin sales and use tax, materials used in road construction and repair are generally subject to state and local sales and use taxes; and

WHEREAS, the state sales tax rate applicable in most counties is five (5%); and

WHEREAS, state and local governments across Wisconsin are experiencing significant fiscal pressure in maintaining and improving public road systems essential to economic activity, public safety, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, removing state sales and use tax on road construction materials would increase the purchasing power of local governments for road-related expenditures by approximately 5% allowing for additional infrastructure work to be completed within existing budgets; and

WHEREAS, the estimated reduction in state sales tax revenue resulting from such an exemption is less than one half percent of total annual state sales tax collections, or approximately \$30 million out of \$7 billion in state sales tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, such a policy adjustment would provide a meaningful increase in local infrastructure investment capacity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the State Legislature remove the Wisconsin state sales and use taxes on materials used in public road construction and maintenance projects.

2026 Conference Resolution 24

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Frohling, second by Koch, to adopt.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VII.D.39. Support legislation that removes Wisconsin state sales and use taxes on materials used in public road construction and maintenance projects.

Transportation and Public Works

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 25

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Eau Claire County

Relating to

Supporting State Action on Sustainable Transportation Funding

WHEREAS, local units of government in Wisconsin own and maintain approximately 90% of the public road miles in the state, including county highways, town roads, and city and village streets; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's economy—rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism relies on a safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation network; and

WHEREAS, local governments greatly appreciate the one-time infusions of General Purpose Revenue, primarily sales and income taxes, and other revenue provided in recent state budgets, which have enabled the initiation and continuation of the successful and popular Local Roads Improvement Program Supplemental (LRIP-S) and Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP); and

WHEREAS, despite modest increases from the state over the years, transportation aids to local governments remain insufficient to keep pace with inflation and rising construction costs, leaving many communities funded below 2000 levels in real dollars; and

WHEREAS, local governments throughout Wisconsin continue to struggle to perform even routine maintenance, pavement preservation, and safety improvements, resulting in deteriorating roads and bridges; and

WHEREAS, the inaugural inventory and assessment of small bridges between 6 to 20 feet found about 10% of the nearly 17,000 structures to be in poor or severe condition; and

WHEREAS, levy limits and other fiscal constraints prevent local governments from independently filling the funding gap created by inadequate state transportation aids; and

WHEREAS, absent sustainable state funding, many communities have been forced to address their shortfalls by significantly increasing borrowing, deferring essential projects, or imposing local vehicle registration (“wheel”) taxes; and

2026 Conference Resolution 25

WHEREAS, Wisconsin motorists currently pay among the lowest transportation user fees in the Midwest, while neighboring states and dozens of others nationwide have enacted long-term revenue measures to keep their transportation systems competitive; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is increasingly relying on General Purpose Revenues to make needed investments, potentially pitting transportation against other vital services, such as education; and

WHEREAS, continued lack of growing, dedicated, and predictable revenue places Wisconsin at a growing economic disadvantage by threatening the efficiency of freight movement, the safety of travelers, and the attractiveness of our state to businesses and residents; and

WHEREAS, both Wisconsin's aging Interstate highway system—largely constructed in the 1950s and 1960s—and our extensive network of state and local roads require predictable, adequate, and sustainable funding to meet current and future needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;
- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Ives, second by Gabrielson, to adopt Resolutions 25-30. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VI.B.26. Urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

2026 Conference Resolution 25

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;
- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

Transportation and Public Works

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 26

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Walworth County

Relating to

Urging the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to Enact a Comprehensive, Sustainable Transportation Funding Solution

WHEREAS, local units of government in Wisconsin own and maintain approximately 90% of the public road miles in the state, including county highways, town roads, and city and village streets; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's economy—rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism—relies on a safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation network; and

WHEREAS, local governments greatly appreciate the one-time infusions of General Purpose Revenue, primarily sales and income taxes, and other revenue provided in recent state budgets, which have enabled the initiation and continuation of the successful and popular Local Roads Improvement Program Supplemental (LRIP-S); and

WHEREAS, despite modest increases from the state over the years, transportation aids to local governments remain insufficient to keep pace with inflation and rising construction costs, leaving many communities funded below 2000 levels in real dollars; and

WHEREAS, local governments throughout Wisconsin continue to struggle to perform even routine maintenance, pavement preservation, and safety improvements, resulting in deteriorating roads and bridge ratings; and

WHEREAS, the inaugural inventory and assessment of small bridges between 6 to 20 feet found about 10% of the nearly 17,000 structures to be in poor or severe condition with a potential funding requirement of \$200,000,000; and

WHEREAS, the levy limits and other fiscal constraints prevent local governments from independently filling the funding gap created by inadequate state transportation aids; and

WHEREAS, absent sustainable state funding, many communities have been forced to address their shortfalls by significantly increasing borrowing costs, competing for once-in-a-generation federal funding, deferring essential projects, or imposing local vehicle registration ("wheel") taxes; and

2026 Conference Resolution 26

WHEREAS, neighboring states and dozens of others nationwide have enacted long-term revenue measures to keep their transportation systems competitive; and

WHEREAS, counties maintain state roads using a service model that favors costly state improvement projects instead of affordable yet underfunded maintenance; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is increasingly relying on General Purpose Revenues to make needed investments, potentially pitting transportation against other vital services, such as education; and

WHEREAS, continued lack of growing, dedicated, and predictable revenues places Wisconsin at a growing economic disadvantage by threatening the efficiency of freight movement, the safety of travelers, and the attractiveness of our state to businesses and residents; and

WHEREAS, both Wisconsin's aging state and local highway systems—largely constructed in the 1950s and 1960s—required predictable, adequate, and sustainable maintenance and improvement funding to meet current and emerging needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby strongly urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable funding solution that provides adequate and reliable revenue to maintain and improve the transportation network, long-term planning, and associated infrastructure management programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association supports simplifying and consolidating programs so local priorities guide highway improvements like culverts and pavements through clear processes.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Ives, second by Gabrielson, to adopt Resolutions 25-30. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VI.B.26. Urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

2026 Conference Resolution 26

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;
- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

Transportation and Public Works

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 27

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Polk County

Relating to

Transportation Funding Solutions

WHEREAS, local units of government in Wisconsin own and maintain approximately 90% of the public road miles in the state, including county highways, town roads, and city and village streets; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's economy—rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism—relies on a safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation network; and

WHEREAS, local governments greatly appreciate the one-time infusions of General Purpose Revenue, primarily sales and income taxes, and other revenue provided in recent state budgets, which have enabled the initiation and continuation of the successful and popular Local Roads Improvement Program Supplemental (LRIP-S) and Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP); and

WHEREAS, despite modest increases from the state over the years, transportation aids to local governments remain insufficient to keep pace with inflation and rising construction costs, leaving many communities funded below 2000 levels in real dollars; and

WHEREAS, local governments throughout Wisconsin continue to struggle to perform even routine maintenance, pavement preservation, and safety improvements, resulting in deteriorating roads and bridges; and

WHEREAS, the inaugural inventory and assessment of small bridges between 6 to 20 feet found about 10% of the nearly 17,000 structures to be in poor or severe condition; and

WHEREAS, levy limits and other fiscal constraints prevent local governments from independently filling the funding gap created by inadequate state transportation aids; and

WHEREAS, absent sustainable state funding, many communities have been forced to address their shortfalls by significantly increasing borrowing, deferring essential projects, or imposing local vehicle registration (“wheel”) taxes; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin motorists currently pay among the lowest transportation user fees in the Midwest, while neighboring states and dozens of others nationwide have enacted long-term revenue measures to keep their transportation systems competitive; and

2026 Conference Resolution 27

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is increasingly relying on General Purpose Revenues to make needed investments, potentially pitting transportation against other vital services, such as education; and

WHEREAS, continued lack of growing, dedicated, and predictable revenue places Wisconsin at a growing economic disadvantage by threatening the efficiency of freight movement, the safety of travelers, and the attractiveness of our state to businesses and residents; and

WHEREAS, both Wisconsin's aging Interstate highway system—largely constructed in the 1950s and 1960s—and our extensive network of state and local roads require predictable, adequate, and sustainable funding to meet current and future needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby strongly urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that: 1. Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs; 2. Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding; 3. Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and 4. Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Ives, second by Gabrielson, to adopt Resolutions 25-30. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VI.B.26. Urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;

2026 Conference Resolution 27

- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

Transportation and Public Works

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 28

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Outagamie County

Relating to

Urging the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to Enact a Comprehensive, Sustainable Transportation Funding Solution

WHEREAS, local units of government in Wisconsin own and maintain approximately 90% of the public road miles in the state, including county highways, town roads, and city and village streets. Wisconsin's economy—rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism—relies on a safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation network; and

WHEREAS, local governments greatly appreciate the one-time infusions of General Purpose Revenue, primarily sales and income taxes, and other revenue provided in recent state budgets, which have enabled the initiation and continuation of the successful and popular Local Roads Improvement Program Supplemental (LRIP-S) and Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP); and

WHEREAS, despite modest increases from the state over the years, transportation aids to local governments remain insufficient to keep pace with inflation and rising construction costs, leaving many communities funded below year 2000 levels in real dollars. Local governments throughout Wisconsin continue to struggle to perform even routine maintenance, pavement preservation, and safety improvements, resulting in deteriorating roads and bridges. The inaugural inventory and assessment of small bridges between 6 to 20 feet found about 10% of the nearly 17,000 structures to be in poor or severe condition; and

WHEREAS, levy limits and other fiscal constraints prevent local governments from independently filling the funding gap created by inadequate state transportation aids. Absent sustainable state funding, many communities have been forced to address their shortfalls by significantly increasing borrowing, deferring essential projects, or imposing local vehicle registration ("wheel") taxes; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin motorists currently pay among the lowest transportation user fees in the Midwest, while neighboring states and dozens of others nationwide have enacted long-term revenue measures to keep their transportation systems competitive. Wisconsin is increasingly relying on General Purpose Revenues to make needed investments, potentially pitting transportation against other vital services, such as education; and

2026 Conference Resolution 28

WHEREAS, continued lack of growing, dedicated, and predictable revenue places Wisconsin at a growing economic disadvantage by threatening the efficiency of freight movement, the safety of travelers, and the attractiveness of our state to businesses and residents. Both Wisconsin's aging Interstate highway system—largely constructed in the 1950s and 1960s—and our extensive network of state and local roads require predictable, adequate, and sustainable funding to meet current and future needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby strongly urges the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs.
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding
- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure.
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Ives, second by Gabrielson, to adopt Resolutions 25-30. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VI.B.26. Urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;
- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 29

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Door County

Relating to

Requesting a Sustainable Transportation Funding Solution

WHEREAS, local units of government in Wisconsin own and maintain approximately 90% of the public road miles in the state, including county highways, town roads, and city and village streets; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's economy—rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism—relies on a safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation network; and

WHEREAS, local governments greatly appreciate the one-time infusions of General Purpose Revenue, primarily sales and income taxes, and other revenue provided in recent state budgets, which have enabled the initiation and continuation of the successful and popular Local Roads Improvement Program Supplemental (LRIP-S) and Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP); and

WHEREAS, despite modest increases from the state over the years, transportation aids to local governments remain insufficient to keep pace with inflation and rising construction costs, leaving many communities funded below 2000 levels in real dollars; and

WHEREAS, local governments throughout Wisconsin continue to struggle to perform even routine maintenance, pavement preservation, and safety improvements, resulting in deteriorating roads and bridges; and

WHEREAS, the inaugural inventory and assessment of small bridges between 6 to 20 feet found about 10% of the nearly 17,000 structures to be in poor or severe condition; and

WHEREAS, levy limits and other fiscal constraints prevent local governments from independently filling the funding gap created by inadequate state transportation aids; and

WHEREAS, absent sustainable state funding, many communities have been forced to address their shortfalls by significantly increasing borrowing, deferring essential projects, or imposing local vehicle registration ("wheel") taxes; and

2026 Conference Resolution 29

WHEREAS, Wisconsin motorists currently pay among the lowest transportation user fees in the Midwest, while neighboring states and dozens of others nationwide have enacted long-term revenue measures to keep their transportation systems competitive; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is increasingly relying on General Purpose Revenues to make needed investments, potentially pitting transportation against other vital services, such as education; and

WHEREAS, continued lack of growing, dedicated, and predictable revenue places Wisconsin at a growing economic disadvantage by threatening the efficiency of freight movement, the safety of travelers, and the attractiveness of our state to businesses and residents; and

WHEREAS, both Wisconsin's aging Interstate highway system—largely constructed in the 1950s and 1960s—and our extensive network of state and local roads require predictable, adequate, and sustainable funding to meet current and future needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby strongly urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

1. Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
2. Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;
3. Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
4. Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Ives, second by Gabrielson, to adopt Resolutions 25-30. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

2026 Conference Resolution 29

Caption:

VI.B.26. Urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;
- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

Transportation and Public Works

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 30

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Barron County

Relating to

Supporting Sustainable Transportation Funding

WHEREAS, local units of government in Wisconsin own and maintain approximately 90% of the public road miles in the state, including county highways, town roads, and city and village streets; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's economy—rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism—relies on a safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation network; and

WHEREAS, local governments greatly appreciate the one-time infusions of General Purpose Revenue, primarily sales and income taxes, and other revenue provided in recent state budgets, which have enabled the initiation and continuation of the successful and popular Local Roads Improvement Program Supplemental (LRIP-S) and Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP); and

WHEREAS, despite modest increases from the state over the years, transportation aids to local governments remain insufficient to keep pace with inflation and rising construction costs, leaving many communities funded below 2000 levels in real dollars; and

WHEREAS, local governments throughout Wisconsin continue to struggle to perform even routine maintenance, pavement preservation, and safety improvements, resulting in deteriorating roads and bridges; and

WHEREAS, the inaugural inventory and assessment of small bridges between 6 to 20 feet found about 10% of the nearly 17,000 structures to be in poor or severe condition; and

WHEREAS, levy limits and other fiscal constraints prevent local governments from independently filling the funding gap created by inadequate state transportation aids; and

WHEREAS, absent sustainable state funding, many communities have been forced to address their shortfalls by significantly increasing borrowing, deferring essential projects, or imposing local vehicle registration (“wheel”) taxes; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin motorists currently pay among the lowest transportation user fees in the Midwest, while neighboring states and dozens of others nationwide have enacted long-term revenue measures to keep their transportation systems competitive; and

2026 Conference Resolution 30

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is increasingly relying on General Purpose Revenues to make needed investments, potentially pitting transportation against other vital services, such as education; and

WHEREAS, continued lack of growing, dedicated, and predictable revenue places Wisconsin at a growing economic disadvantage by threatening the efficiency of freight movement, the safety of travelers, and the attractiveness of our state to businesses and residents; and

WHEREAS, both Wisconsin's aging Interstate highway system—largely constructed in the 1950s and 1960s—and our extensive network of state and local roads require predictable, adequate, and sustainable funding to meet current and future needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby strongly urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

1. Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
2. Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;
3. Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
4. Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Ives, second by Gabrielson, to adopt Resolutions 25-30. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

VI.B.26. Urge the Governor of Wisconsin and the State Legislature to enact a comprehensive, sustainable transportation funding solution that:

- Provides adequate and reliable revenue growth for the efficient long-term planning and execution of state and local transportation programs;
- Includes responsible and prudent use of General Purpose Revenue and bonding;

2026 Conference Resolution 30

- Adjusts any new and existing transportation user fees and other revenue mechanisms to sustain purchasing power in order to maintain and improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure; and
- Ensures transportation continues to deliver for Wisconsin by adequately funding reconstruction, preservation, and safety investments on the state and local systems.

Transportation and Public Works

RESOLUTIONS 31-35

REAFFIRM CURRENT POSITIONS OF THE WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 31

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Jefferson County

Relating to

Urging the Incorporation of Local Feedback and Technical Expert Committee Recommendations in ATPC 51

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has established a uniform livestock siting framework under Wis. Stat. §93.90 and Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATPC 51, intended to provide consistent standards and practices for livestock operations across the state; and

WHEREAS, ATPC 51 is a rule of significant consequence to both agricultural producers and local governments; and

WHEREAS, counties throughout Wisconsin, including Jefferson County, possess deep institutional knowledge and on-the-ground experience with agricultural siting issues, often serving as the first point of contact for implementing ATPC 51; and

WHEREAS, ATPC has invited public comment and technical feedback from local governments, yet it is unclear how that input has been used by state policymakers; and

WHEREAS, a Technical Expert Committee is convened every four years to initiate a review of ATPC 51, and although that information has been repeatedly sent to state policymakers, there have not been any recent updates; and

WHEREAS, meaningful inclusion of feedback from county elected officials, land conservation departments, planning and zoning officials, farmers, and other subject matter experts is essential to crafting regulations that are both scientifically sound and practically implementable at the local level; and

WHEREAS, while local input is vital, statewide uniformity remains a critical goal to ensure predictability, fairness, and consistency for both agricultural producers and regulatory bodies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, the Wisconsin Legislature, and the Governor to ensure that information and expertise gathered from counties and local governments across Wisconsin, and the recommendations from the Technical Expert Committee, are substantively considered in an

2026 Conference Resolution 31

update to ATCP 51, while the state retains regulatory authority to provide uniformity and consistency.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Hofberger, to adopt Resolutions 31-35. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

II.D.2.cc. Urge the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, the Wisconsin Legislature, and the Governor to ensure that information and expertise gathered from counties and local governments across Wisconsin, and the recommendations from the Technical Expert Committee, are substantively considered and reflected in any updates to ATCP 51, while the state retains regulatory authority to provide uniformity and consistency.

Agriculture, Environment and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 32

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Jefferson County

Relating to

Supporting the Continuation of Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, created in 1989 and named in honor of Wisconsin conservation leaders Governor Warren Knowles and Senator Gaylord Nelson, has been instrumental in protecting Wisconsin's natural resources and expanding public access to outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, since 1999 the Stewardship Program has allowed for \$1.2 billion of bonding authority to fund land acquisition, recreational boating aids, and property development and local assistance; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson County has been a direct beneficiary of this program through numerous grants and partnerships that have enhanced local parks, protected vital natural areas, expanded trail systems, and improved water quality, contributing to the well-being, health, and enjoyment of our residents and visitors; and aligning directly with the Jefferson County Parks Department's mission to preserve and enhance our natural resources for present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, continued investment in the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is vital for Jefferson County to meet its vision of building a resilient, sustainable, and connected park and trail system that contributes to the overall quality of life and environmental health of our communities; and

WHEREAS, local governments, nonprofit partners, and citizens rely on the stability and availability of Stewardship Program funds to match local investments and maximize community-driven conservation and recreation initiatives.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby express its strong support for the Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and respectfully urges the Wisconsin State Legislature and the Governor to renew the program and continue to fund into the future.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Adopt.

2026 Conference Resolution 32

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Hofberger, to adopt Resolutions 31-35. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

II.D.6.d. Support funding renewal for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Agriculture, Environment and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 33

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Walworth County

Relating to

Supporting the Renewal of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

WHEREAS, the acquisition and development of White River Park in Walworth County benefited from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin State Legislature created the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program in 1989 to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, per Ch. 23.0915(2c)(d), Wis. Stats., the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is set to expire in 2027; and

WHEREAS, the program has supported land acquisition and capital development by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), local governments including Walworth County, and nonprofit conservation organizations to preserve valuable natural areas, wildlife habitat, water quality, and outdoor recreation for public benefit around the state; and

WHEREAS, Walworth County utilized the stewardship grant funds to develop trails and other public outdoor recreation opportunities at White River Park and desires to support the continuation of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support the State of Wisconsin funding renewal of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Hofberger, to adopt Resolutions 31-35. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

2026 Conference Resolution 33

Caption:

II.D.6.d. Support funding renewal for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Agriculture, Environment, and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 34

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Monroe County

Relating to

Supporting the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

WHEREAS, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program was created in 1989 to “preserve important natural communities, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation,” according to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR); and

WHEREAS, Stewardship funds allow counties and municipalities to purchase land, develop recreational opportunities, and expand public lands and nature preserves; and

WHEREAS, more than 650,000 acres of land throughout Wisconsin have been protected by the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program since its inception; and

WHEREAS, more than 84 projects in Monroe County have received funding from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program since its inception; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County has used Stewardship funds to add almost 400 acres of land to our county forest, as well as to make improvements to McMullen County Park; and

WHEREAS, many of the projects across Monroe County would not have been completed without funding from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program; and

WHEREAS, the current legislature failed to reauthorize the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, meaning the program will expire in June 2026 without meaningful legislative action; and

WHEREAS, it is important to provide local communities with resources to preserve public spaces and develop recreational opportunities for their residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby support the renewal of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Hofberger, to

2026 Conference Resolution 34

Adopt Resolutions 31-35. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

II.D.6.d. Support funding renewal for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Agriculture, Environment, and Land Use

Wisconsin Counties Association

2026 Conference Resolution 35

Offered for consideration this 20th Day of September 2026 by

Bayfield County

Relating to

Supporting Funding of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

WHEREAS, in 1989, Governor Tommy Thompson and the Wisconsin Legislature created the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (Stewardship Program) to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries and expand opportunities for public outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, the Stewardship Program was renamed the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship Program after two of Wisconsin's revered conservation leaders, Warren Knowles (governor 1965-1971) and Gaylord Nelson (governor 1959-1963, U.S. Senator 1964-1981); and

WHEREAS, the Stewardship Program gives the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) authority to purchase land and easement additions to state properties. Stewardship dollars also support recreational infrastructure on state properties, including campsite, restroom and trail improvements; and

WHEREAS, most annual Stewardship spending takes the form of cost-shared grants to local governments and nonprofits. Stewardship grants help to fund local park infrastructure, boat ramp facilities, and recreational trails, as well as land purchases for parks, public forest lands and nature preserves statewide; and

WHEREAS, from its inception, the Stewardship Program has funded not just DNR land acquisition and recreational development, but also a suite of grant subprograms through which local communities and nonprofits, matching the state investment dollar-for-dollar, have expanded parks, public forest lands and nature preserves. Over 1,500 Stewardship grants have been awarded, with projects located in every one of Wisconsin's 72 counties; and

WHEREAS, 93 percent of all Wisconsin households are located within one mile of a project funded by the Stewardship Program, further supporting Wisconsin residents' quality and way of life; and

WHEREAS, the Stewardship Program supports Wisconsin's \$12 billion outdoor recreation industry, as well as the State's \$41 billion timber industry; and

2026 Conference Resolution 35

WHEREAS, the 2026-27 State budget did not include any funding for the Stewardship Program; and

WHEREAS, the Stewardship Program is a cornerstone of Wisconsin's conservation legacy, vital for safeguarding the State's natural resources, bolstering economic prosperity, supporting public recreation, and enhancing the quality of life for all Wisconsinites.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Counties Association, in conference assembled, does hereby urge the State Legislature to restore full funding to the previously funded amounts of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:
Adopt.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION: Motion by Clendenning, second by Hofberger, to adopt Resolutions 31-35. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt.

2026 CONFERENCE ACTION:

Caption:

II.D.6.d. Support funding renewal for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Agriculture, Environment, and Land Use



Resolution

No. 2026-xx

EMS Sustainability & Statewide Funding Advocating Statewide Investment, Modernization, and Workforce Support for EMS

WHEREAS, rural Emergency Medical Services (EMS) across Wisconsin face increasing strain due to declining volunteerism, workforce shortages, rising operational costs, and increasing 9-1-1 call volumes; *and*

WHEREAS, local and regional analyses have documented gaps in coverage, including unanswered calls and limited availability of Advanced Life Support (ALS) resources in rural areas; *and*

WHEREAS, towns are mandated by state law to provide or arrange EMS services, yet many rural municipalities lack stable funding and workforce pipelines to meet modern clinical standards; *and*

WHEREAS, counties are increasingly contributing levy resources to stabilize EMS systems, coordinate multi-agency planning, and improve dispatch and system design; *and*

WHEREAS, the sustainability of EMS requires statewide investment, shared service models, and workforce development strategies designed for rural and urban realities; *and*

WHEREAS, many states define EMS as an “Essential Service” opening new funding streams and opportunities for sustainability.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Wisconsin Counties Association that the State of Wisconsin establish an EMS Sustainability Fund providing long-term, predictable annual funding to counties and municipalities; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State of Wisconsin designates EMS as an “Essential Service”, eligible for state funding and assistance; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State support EMS workforce development in underserved regions; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State modernize EMS statutes and administrative rules to enable flexible staffing and regional/shared-service models while maintaining patient-safety standards and clinical quality; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State fund countywide EMS coordination and regional planning functions, evidence-based system design, and data tools to monitor response times, clinical capability, and patient outcomes; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State partner with technical colleges and universities to address EMS program quality, expand seats, and build rural career pathways aligned to local demand; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that WCA transmit this resolution to the Governor, legislative leadership, and the Departments of Health Services and Safety & Professional Services and work with counties to advance enabling legislation and appropriations.

By Action of the:
Bayfield County Board of Supervisors

Jan Lee, *Chair*

STATE OF WISCONSIN)
) ss.
COUNTY OF BAYFIELD)

I, Lynn M. Divine, *Bayfield County Clerk*, hereby
certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of
Resolution No. 2026-xx, Volume 30, adopted by the
Bayfield County Board of Supervisors at their meeting
held on the 25th day of August 2026.

Lynn M. Divine, *Bayfield County Clerk*