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Governor Evers Continues His End-of-Session Work

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With timing winding down in the 2025-2026 Legislative Session, the Governor has been making his way through the stack of bills the Legislature passed in the final few months of session. After the Governor's actions on dozens of bills last week and yesterday including several major League initiatives such as PFAS liability and programs, increased bidding thresholds, and some housing bills, there's still ten bills with League lobbying positions on the Governor's desk with a deadline for action of this Thursday, April 9th. The summary below details recent actions and provides a list of what's remaining on the Governor's desk.

Milestone PFAS Legislation Signed into Law

Together, [Assembly Bills 130](#) and [131](#), now [2025 Wisconsin Acts 200](#) and [201](#), deliver vital financial support and liability protections to municipalities of all sizes across the state who simply provide the critical services of reclamation of wastewater, provision of safe drinking water, collection of residential waste, promotion of redevelopment, and suppression of fires during emergencies. Municipalities do not manufacture PFAS – we're passive receivers of this emerging contaminant and it was only used when necessary for the protection of life and property during a flammable liquid fire or training for these complex and dangerous operations.

The number of communities impacted by PFAS contamination continues to grow. Ratepayers and residents cannot be solely on the hook for the full cost of tackling the PFAS problem. The League and our members asked the Legislature and Governor to form a partnership that begins with protections from enforcement and includes financial assistance. The Legislature and Governor answered the call.

Thank you to the authors, Senator Wimberger (R-Gillett) and Representative Mursau (R-Crivitz), Governor Evers, and Department of Natural Resources Secretary Hyun for your collaborative work on this landmark initiative! We're excited this action is based on municipalities being treated as partners, not polluters, in our state's continued response to this growing problem. Acts 200 and 201 will (among other things):

- exempt municipalities from liability under the state's Spills Law for certain actions, including (but not limited to) properties a municipality's purchases that were contaminated, fire departments that used PFAS foam in training or emergencies, discharges of contaminated wastewater and biosolids, and municipal landfills as long as specific steps are taken,
- commit nearly \$80 million to a PFAS Community Grant Program for municipalities and other local governments to address testing and capital needs related to PFAS contamination in our communities, and
- provide over \$5 million to an Airport and Industrial Processor PFAS Grant Program to begin eligible remediation efforts at public airports that trained with PFAS-laden firefighting foam.

With this exciting initiative now in law, the League will be preparing and providing a more detailed overview of the items contained in these new laws in future member educational opportunities.

Bidding Thresholds Increased for First Time in Over Two Decades

Inflation, while in the news in recent years for its unusually high levels, is an everyday reality for Wisconsin's local governments. The cost of everything local governments must purchase, including medical supplies, paper, concrete, lumber, wiring, asphalt, piping, fire apparatus, snowplows, electricity, and

software, has gone up substantially in the 21st century. This has considerably strained local resources, especially under Wisconsin's tight levy limits.

While the cost of purchasing goods and services has gone up, the public notice and bidding thresholds have not. More than two decades ago, thresholds were set at \$5,000 for a public notice to be issued and \$25,000 for a request for proposals, or competitive bid, to be issued. These thresholds have remained stagnant as the rate of inflation has nearly doubled. Adjusting for inflation, \$25,000 when the last increase was granted is approximately \$48,000 today. Simply put, the statutes haven't kept pace with reality.

[Assembly Bill 217](#), which has now been signed into law as [2025 Wisconsin Act 188](#), doubles the bidding and notice thresholds, raising those levels to \$50,000 and \$10,000, respectively. These increases apply to all public construction projects *except* road construction projects (which still have the \$5,000 and \$25,000 thresholds) and take effect for any bids being solicited on or after April 4th. These increases reflect the economic realities of today and reduce the burdensome and lengthy process of requiring bids on smaller projects.

We're excited the Governor signed AB 217 into law and thank the authors, Senator Tomczyk (R-Mosinee) and Representative O'Connor (R-Fond du Lac), for championing this effort.

New Mechanism to Fund Housing Infrastructure

The old saying "it takes a village (or a city)" rings especially true when it comes to modern housing developments. To build affordable workforce housing, municipalities often can't simply work with developers on regulatory reviews and approvals. Rather cities and villages may need to take a more active role in the process. This legislation is the latest in a line of efforts meant to provide municipalities with additional tools in the toolbox to allow them to be an active partner in housing.

[Assembly Bill 737](#), now [2025 Wisconsin Act 120](#), allows municipalities, upon being petitioned by a developer, to establish a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) where the cost of infrastructure to support a residential development may be fronted then recovered through a special assessment on the property. This means that future homeowners would pay the costs over time instead of upfront.

Previously, NID statutes required at least five property owners to submit a petition to create a NID. If a single developer, or even a small group of developers, was working on a housing development project, they may not have five unique property owners to be able to submit a petition. This legislation clears up that hurdle and provides a new tool for municipalities to be able to assist in lowering the immediate upfront cost of housing.

Thank you to the authors, Senator Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk) and Rep. Armstrong (R-Rice Lake), for expanding this tool to promote more housing developments and to the Governor for signing this legislation into law. Act 120 is in effect immediately, meaning it may now be utilized by municipalities in partnership with developers to support the cost of housing infrastructure in new residential developments.

Recreational Drones Prohibited from Flying Over Utilities

Another one of the League's priorities to pass in 2026 was [Assembly Bill 768](#) which has now been signed into law as [2025 Wisconsin Act 194](#). With certain exceptions including for municipalities themselves, this new law prohibits the operation of drones over municipal water and wastewater utilities along with other utility facilities. Based on a [survey](#) conducted of municipal utility officials, 89% wanted to see unauthorized drones prohibited from flying over their facilities while another 10% were unsure.

Drones over utility facilities pose a number of risks from irresponsible drone operators causing inadvertent harm to malicious actors using drones to conduct bad acts. We've already seen these issues play out in other states and even right here in Wisconsin. Act 194 ensures we have a law on the books to begin tackling these concerns before it's too late. Thank you to Sen. Tomczyk (R-Mosinee) and Rep. Donovan (R-Greenfield) for authoring this common-sense approach and to the Governor for signing it into law.

Truth in Planning Bill Now Set to Take Effect in 2028

[Assembly Bill 453](#), now [2025 Wisconsin Act 173](#), has also been known as “Truth in Planning.” While the legislation has many intricacies in the process, the general components of Act 173 include:

1. requiring municipal comprehensive plans that designate areas as future use residential to determine the desired minimum and maximum densities of that area as expressed in units per acre in five-year increments over the 20-year planning period,
2. providing developers the certainty of having a rezoning request granted by a municipality if the area was designated as future use residential, their request is for a project within the desired densities, and certain other requirements are met,
3. revising the definition of “newly platted residential” in the tax incremental financing statutes so the prohibitions and percentage limitations on newly platted residential only apply to properties where no permanent structures, other than agricultural structures, previously existed, and
4. extending the affordable housing TID extension from one-year following the closure of a TID to two years post-closure if approved through a resolution of the municipal governing body.

While the League did not support Act 173, we were neutral on this legislation following the authors and stakeholders agreeing to accept many modifications we requested in the initial bill drafting process and through amendments. One of those modifications includes a delayed effective date. While Act 173 has been signed into law, the requirements of this legislation will not take effect until January 1, 2028.

The Truth in Planning bill isn’t the only major housing legislation to pass this session. With more than a half-dozen notable housing bills that have either been signed into law or are expected to be signed into law this week, the League is planning member educational materials and opportunities this summer and fall that will not only discuss the language of these new laws, but their practical effect on our members.

Actions on Other Bills with League Lobbying Positions

- **Utility Aids for Energy Storage Facilities** - [Act 163 \(SB 556\)](#) - Sen. James (R-Thorp) and Rep. Rodriguez (R-Oak Creek) - This legislation expands utility aid payments, which are provided for energy generation facilities owned by utilities, to also include energy storage facilities. Aid payments will now provide \$1,000 per megawatt of storage capacity. *The League supported this legislation.*
- **Establishing a Battery Stewardship Program** - [Acts 170](#) and [171 \(ABs 713 and 911\)](#) - Sen. Tomczyk (R-Mosinee) and Rep. Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) - This legislation establishes a battery stewardship program where a statewide organization will set up collection sites statewide. Lithium-ion batteries will also be banned from the waste stream. *The League supported this legislation.*
- **Extending the Assured Wetland Delineator Program** - [Act 172 \(SB 798\)](#) - Sen. Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk) and Rep. Mursau (R-Crivitz) - This legislation provides a sensible approach to streamlining wetland delineations necessary for permitting projects by allowing qualified third-parties to perform the work. *The League supported this legislation.*
- **Codifying Fatality Review Teams** - [Act 148 \(AB 192\)](#) - Sen. James (R-Thorp) and Rep. Moses (R-Menomonie) - This legislation codifies the structure of fatality review teams into current law and grants these teams access to certain records and confidentiality protections when investigating upticks in similar preventable deaths. *The League supported this legislation.*
- **Treatment for PFAS in Landfill Leachate** - [Act 169 \(AB 605\)](#) - Sen. Tomczyk (R-Mosinee) and Rep. Jacobson (R-Mosinee) - This legislation allows municipalities and counties that own landfills to retain their Environmental Repair Fees for the purpose of repaying a Clean Water Fund Loan taken out for the purpose of leachate treatment. *The League supported this legislation.*

- **Employer-Provided Childcare Tax Credit** - [Act 183 \(SB 376\)](#) - Sen. Feyen (R-Fond du Lac) and Rep. Armstrong (R-Rice Lake) - This legislation adopts recent federal tax code changes into Wisconsin's tax law to allow employers to claim credits for their direct childcare expenditures or childcare referral services for their employees. *The League supported this legislation.*
- **Property Tax Exemption for Campers in Campgrounds** - [Act 117 \(SB 576\)](#) - Sen. Cabral-Guevara (R-Fox Crossing) and Rep. Petersen (R-Waupaca) - This legislation exempts certain camper trailers from being classified as real property and being assessed for property taxes if those eligible camper trailers are located in a licensed campground. Aid payments in lieu of property taxation will be made available beginning in 2027. *The League was neutral on this legislation.*
- **Weight Limits for Hauling Agricultural Products** - [Act 161 \(AB 679\)](#) - Sen. Tomczyk (R-Mosinee) and Rep. Jacobson (R-Mosinee) - This legislation allows the state to issue an overweight permit for hauling agricultural products on certain highways. An earlier version of the bill allowed overweight loads on local roads but was removed. *The League was neutral on this legislation.*
- **Grant Writing Service Assistance** - [Vetoed \(AB 326\)](#) - Sen. Marklein (R-Spring Green) and Rep. Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) - This legislation aimed to allow local governments with populations under 7,500 to apply for grants from a \$3 million allocation to obtain grant writing and compliance services in their pursuit of certain grant programs. The Governor stated in his veto message that he didn't sign this into law because the Department of Revenue wasn't provided funding or resources.

Other Bills of Municipal Significance Recently Signed

- **Base Value of Tax Incremental Districts** - [Act 137 \(AB 934\)](#) - Joint Legislative Council - As part of remedial legislation suggested by the Department of Revenue, this legislation clarifies that the definition of taxable property used for base and incremental values of a TID does not include personal property. Following Act 12, many municipalities amended their TIDs to remove personal property from any calculation. With the changes in Act 137, municipalities that have yet to amend their TID plans and make this change to remove personal property valuations must now do so.
- **PTSD Coverage in Worker's Compensation** - [Act 145 \(AB 651\)](#) - Assembly Committee on Workforce Development, Labor, and Integrated Employment - Among other changes to the Worker's Compensation laws, this legislation expands eligibility for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) coverage to include volunteer and part-time firefighters and emergency medical services personnel. Act 145 aligns the coverage for these public safety officials with the current worker's compensation coverage for PTSD afforded to law enforcement officers and full-time firefighters.
- **Serving a Subpoena to Police Officers** - [Act 150 \(SB 191\)](#) - Sen. James (R-Thorp) and Rep. Goeben (R-Hobart) - This legislation requires subpoenas to law enforcement officers issued in the officers' official capacity or within the scope of their employment to be served at the officers' work address either with that specific officer or with an employee authorized to receive the subpoena. In other words, this legislation prohibits subpoenas from being served at an officers' home.

League Lobbied Bills Awaiting the Governor's Action

There are just three days remaining for the Governor to act on bills, and along with a host of other legislation, ten bills lobbied on by the League are still awaiting their fate. The chart below summarizes those bills.

Brief Bill Description	Bill Number	League Position
Modifications to the workforce housing loan programs established in the 2025-26 Session	AB 194	In-Favor

Creates a Workforce Housing TIF structure for high-density single-family developments	SB 480	In-Favor
Technical corrections to the electric vehicle charging station law surrounding taxation	SB 96	In-Favor
Revisions to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to ensure statewide distribution	AB 182	In-Favor
Creates a tax credit, which is transferable for municipalities, to perform rail maintenance	AB 219	In-Favor
Clarifies the applicability of historic tax credits in Wisconsin after federal changes	AB 375	In-Favor
Provides gap financing loans to certain prospective moderate-income homebuyers	AB 454	In-Favor
Prohibits private persons from taking public nuisance actions against certain racetracks	AB 880	Neutral
Requires a referendum every 5 years to create a restricted levy exemption for regional EMS	SB 181	Against
Changes condemnation processes for outdoor advertising signs and restricts ordinances	AB 502	Against

To learn more about any of these pieces of legislation, visit our recent [Summary of League Lobbying Positions](#). The document includes hyperlinks to the enrolled bill language that the Governor will either be signing into law or vetoing this week. The League will be recapping the Governor's final actions in our next edition of the Legislative Bulletin on Monday, April 20th.