

4 **A RESOLUTION**

5 Opposing the use of Milwaukee County tax levy to fund long-term renovations at
6 American Family Field to secure a lease extension with the Milwaukee Brewers after the
7 current stadium lease expires in 2030
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9 WHEREAS, Wisconsin Act 56 (1995) created the Southeast Wisconsin
10 Professional Baseball District to oversee the building of Miller Park, a new baseball
11 stadium to replace Milwaukee County Stadium, and authorized a five-county local sales
12 and use tax of 0.1 percent to help pay for the construction of the new facility designed to
13 keep Major League Baseball in Milwaukee; and
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15 WHEREAS, in August of 1995, Milwaukee County agreed to a Memorandum of
16 Understanding (MOU) with the State of Wisconsin, City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee
17 Brewers that among other things, committed \$18 million in additional County funding to
18 support infrastructure improvements for the new stadium (which was later lowered to
19 \$16 million in exchange for demolition and salvage rights to County Stadium granted to
20 the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District); and
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22 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County and their taxpayers have long partnered with the
23 Milwaukee Brewers and related entities to ensure Major League Baseball remains in our
24 community for the benefit of the community, region, and entire state; and
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26 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee Brewers' lease includes a requirement that the
27 Stadium District pay for the 22-year-old ballpark's major capital improvements, as the
28 current lease with the Milwaukee Brewers expires at the end of 2030; and
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30 WHEREAS, renovations to American Family Field over the next 20 years or so
31 are expected to cost approximately \$448 million dollars, to maintain current stadium
32 features such as the retractable roof and covering upgrades such as seats, concourses,
33 and gathering spaces that aims to rival other major league baseball stadiums; and
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35 WHEREAS, Governor Evers has proposed state support of \$290 million for the
36 Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball District in his biennial budget to partially
37 fund the maintenance and improvements upgrades at American Family Field to secure
38 an additional 13-year lease commitment, through 2043, from the Brewers; and
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40 WHEREAS, Governor Evers stated that keeping the Milwaukee Brewers in the
41 county would generate an estimated \$400 million in state sales and income taxes over
42 20 years; and
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44 WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin reached a record surplus of \$7.1 billion in
45 2023, enabling the state legislature flexibility in spending and policy measures; and
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47 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Assembly Speaker recently suggested the Governor's
48 budget proposal to fund American Family Field should be replaced with stand-alone
49 legislation resembling the bill to pay for the new Fiserv Arena, with financial
50 contributions from the state, county, and city; and
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52 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County is facing a fiscal cliff in 2025 severely hampering
53 its ability to provide essential services to its residents such as transportation and
54 support for the County Parks System; and
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56 WHEREAS, these fiscal challenges were made more difficult with the passage of
57 Wisconsin Act 60 in August 2015 which, among other things, mandated Milwaukee
58 County taxpayers provide \$4 million per year for 20 years to the building of the new
59 Milwaukee Bucks arena, known as the Fiserv Forum; and
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61 WHEREAS, it was recently reported that one of the Bucks owners was selling his
62 25 percent share in the team based on a valuation of \$3.5 billion, which is significantly
63 more than the \$550 million the ownership group paid for the team in 2014; and
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65 WHEREAS, the \$4 million annual tax levy contribution to Fiserv Forum has
66 helped fuel the estimated value of the Bucks basketball franchise and made wealthy
67 people even wealthier; and
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69 WHEREAS, the \$4 million annual contribution to the construction of the Fiserv
70 Forum represents almost 20 percent of the tax levy support of the entire Milwaukee
71 County Parks system; and
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73 WHEREAS, the County's budget crunch, exacerbated by flat state aids and high
74 inflation, is reducing the County's ability to fund all programs and services, especially
75 quality of life amenities such as parks that already require hundreds of millions of dollars
76 in capital deferred maintenance investment; and
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78 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County, along with other local governments, operate
79 under strict state-imposed tax levy limits which limited the County's increase to less
80 than 1.2 percent this year, which is significantly less than the rate of inflation; and
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82 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County is unable to provide scarce tax levy dollars to
83 contribute to improving American Family Field when other higher and urgent priorities
84 exist; and
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86 WHEREAS, the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, at its meeting of
87 May 8, 2023, recommended adoption of File No. 23-559 (vote 5-0); now, therefore,
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89 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby opposes
90 the use of County tax levy dollars to help fund long-term renovations at American
91 Family Field as more urgent, higher funding priorities exist in Milwaukee County; and
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93 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Government Affairs staff is
94 authorized and requested to communicate the contents of this resolution to State
95 policymakers and to support legislation to keep the Brewers in Milwaukee without local
96 property tax levy support.
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