



WISCONSIN TOWNS
ASSOCIATION
Empowering Town Officials

MEMORANDUM

TO: Assembly Committee on Transportation

FROM: Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Counties Association, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

DATE: April 6, 2021

SUBJECT: AB 238, Allocation of Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Funds for Local Highways and Bridges

The Wisconsin Towns Association, the Wisconsin Counties Association, and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities appreciate the Legislature's continued focus on and support for local transportation infrastructure needs. In recent years, Wisconsin's legislators have recognized both the importance and significant needs of local roads and streets. Manufacturing supplies and commodities, food, wood products, and building materials require quality first mile infrastructure to efficiently enter the supply chain. Sound last mile connections are necessary for small businesses, consumers, commercial enterprises, and tourists to obtain the goods and services they need. Funding increases in the last two state budgets have begun to address a severe local transportation funding backlog; however, continued investment over a period of years remains paramount.

Both local and state ARPA funding might offer an opportunity to further advance first and last mile infrastructure improvements. Our state and national associations have asked Federal legislators and the Department of Treasury to include horizontal and vertical infrastructure as an allowed use of the ARPA funds. As we await their guidance, we feel it's important that both our local, as well as state officials, collectively consider the following investment principles.

- Funds must be focused on one-time investments and not create long term programs or expectations.
- Investments must be targeted and consider what programs have already received funding through previous COVID related spending.
- Replacing lost revenue will prevent cuts to current public services.
- Spending is not the same as investing. The latter should be the focus.
- Game changing and high leverage investments, such as, roads, bridges, water and sewer upgrades, broadband, and public health that position Wisconsin's economy for long term growth should be a priority.

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AB 238 follows these principles and invests ARPA funding in critical local infrastructure. Pending the Legislature, Governor, and local government officials receiving final Treasury guidance, we encourage them to continue to consider these principles and we look forward to supporting them in those efforts.

Thank you for considering our comments.