I. Governor’s Proposed 2015-2017 State Budget AB21/SB21

A. Transportation:

   a. WTA supports an additional increase.

2. TRI & TRI-D programs.
   a. Proposed in budget without any program or funding level changes.
   b. WTA supports changing the TRI-D state-local ratio from 50-50 to 80-20.

3. Proposed $1.3 billion in bonding.
   a. WTA opposed this scale of bonding because of its eroding effect on future transportation funding.
   b. WTA supports an adequate, sustainable (long term) & equitable solution to funding transportation.
   c. State Constitutional amendment protecting the transportation fund is now law. It passed the legislature twice and then passed a state-wide referendum in fall 2014.

B. Property Tax Assessment, Assessors & Boards of Review proposed for county administration:

1. WTA is opposed to this proposal.

2. The Joint Finance Committee removed this from the budget proposal.

C. Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS) regulatory oversight to move to Dept. of Natural Resources from Dept. of Professional Services & Safety; Elimination of the Wisconsin Fund grant program for seriously deteriorated or failing POWTS.

1. Same proposal is included within AB163/SB119, a separate bill also adopting the reorganization of state agencies.

2. WTA is opposed to this proposal.
3. The Joint Finance Committee removed the transfer, keeping POWTS in DSPS. They also fully restored the Wisconsin Fund for 2015-16 and fund it at 50% of current levels for 2016-17.

4. The Governor has asked for the entire agency merger proposal to be removed by the budget.

D. Recycling grants reduced.

1. Previous 2011-2012 state budget reduced grant levels from $32.1m to $19m; of remaining $19m proposal now is for a reduction to $15m for 2015-16 then back to $19m for 2016-17.

2. WTA is opposed to this proposal.

3. The Joint Finance Committee accepted the Governor’s proposal.

E. Local Government Property Insurance Fund elimination proposal.

1. 159 towns pay $506,908 in premium for $371m in coverage.

2. WTA is opposed to this proposal.

3. The Joint Finance Committee acted to delay elimination of the program by two years. Policies can be renewed until 1/1/18 and claims filed until 7/1/19.

F. Proposed elimination of $2m for town ($666,000 town share) and county road aids providing access to DNR owned and managed properties.

1. WTA is opposed to this proposal.

2. The Joint Finance Committee voted to restore this funding but changed the funding source.

G. Broadband expansion grants.

1. Governor proposed a $500k per year base with an additional $6m in 2016-17 then falling back towards the base plus leftover money from other funds, if any.

2. The Joint Finance Committee voted to provide $2m in total per year up from $500k for the next four years, effectively spreading the one-time $6m increase instead over four years with no other funds involved.

H. Deer-kill pickup contracts elimination proposal.

1. Governor proposed elimination of DNR administered contracts to pick up roadside deer kills. Program picks up approximately 23,000 carcasses and costs $700k per year.

2. The Joint Finance Committee acted to reinstate the money for the next two years while changing some of the sources and requiring a DNR report on cost effectiveness, the number of deer removed and any recommendations by 1/17/2017.

I. Culvert permitting reform.

1. The Joint Finance Committee acted to create the following permitting system for culverts. New culverts would still need a normal general permit from the DNR.
Replacement of an existing culvert would need either a normal general permit from the DNR, or else application to the DNR for an exemption to a general permit. An exemption would possibly be for culverts that would be substantially in the same place and have the town follow best management practices in their installation and keep records that the replacement was done. For an application for an exemption to a general permit, the DNR either has to grant the exemption or it can require the general permit process. However, if the DNR requires the general permit process in order to create new conditions for the culvert the DNR will have to fund the costs of those new conditions instead of the applicant having to fund the costs of those new conditions.

J. Town of Windsor in Dane County given expedited process to incorporate.

K. Increase bidding threshold for public work projects.

1. Currently law involved only board action up to $5,000; Class 1 notice prior to board action for $5,000 - $25,000; and over $25,000 Class 2 notice and bidding. § 60.47.

2. The Joint Finance Committee acted to create new thresholds of only board action up to $15,000; Class 1 notice prior to board action for $15,000 - $100,000; and over $100,000 Class 2 notice and bidding.

L. Managed Forest Law.

1. The Joint Finance Committee acted to distribute $1m in each of the next two years to all local governments containing managed forest law closed acreage at the rate of 80% to the town, city or village and 20% to counties.

2. JFC also acted to eliminate DNR forester positions in favor of using accredited private foresters.

M. Local government levies and fees.

1. Limited carryover adjustment for levy limits beginning in 2015 calculated as the difference between actual and allowable levy over the past 5 years added together but not to exceed 5%. The carryover could be taken only with a 2/3 vote of the governing body and only if outstanding general obligation debt has not increased from the prior year. A local government increasing its levy in any other way negates the ability to utilize this provision.

2. Beginning in 2015, if one local government transfers a service to another local government to consolidate the service provided to both, levy room overall saved by the transfer is divided in half and allotted to each of the local governments involved.

3. Construction and repair of sidewalks, and delinquent special assessments, utility charges and sewerage charges will be recharacterized from special taxes to either special assessments or special charges for tax collection and bills.

4. Utility fire protection water charge (e.g. fire hydrant fee) charged to landowners can only be billed as one parcel charge for owners of adjacent parcels or parcels that are only divided by a roadway or waterway.

N. Room tax reform.
1. Starting 1/1/16, municipalities collecting room tax can no longer directly spend the revenue on tourism promotion and development. They would instead be required to forward the revenue to a separate tourism commission or entity for spending, which was optional under current law.

2. New municipality reporting requirements to DOR.

3. Tourism commissions or entities must spend at least 51% of their revenue on tourism promotion and tourism development and have reporting requirements to municipalities.

4. Any municipalities grandfathered into keeping more than 30% of room tax for non-tourism promotion or development will be phased into the maximum 30%.

M. Urban bow and crossbow hunting.

1. Ends all possible local governmental prevention and/or regulation of bow or crossbow hunting.

N. Odor control plans.

1. A non-agricultural, stationary source that emits odorous substances may apply for a DNR-approved odor control plan.

2. The holder of an approved plan is not subject to any local government regulation regarding odor and would also not be subject to any private nuisance claim for odor.

O. County shoreland zoning standards.

1. Provides several specific issues regarding which a county shoreland zoning ordinance may not be more restrictive than a DNR administrative rule would provide.

II. Stand-Alone Bills

A. 2015 Wisconsin Act 15 – Implements of Husbandry Trailer Bill:

1. Agreed upon clarifications to the original IOH bill.

2. WTA supports this bill.

B. AB122/SB80 – Utility Trucks Weight Limit Exemptions:

1. Exempts utility trucks from seasonal and special weights limits per § 349.16 and from Class B Highway designations per § 349.15 when responding to service outages.

2. Draft does not include language mirroring the current septic haulers exemption for route minimization and notice to the highway maintaining authority after the fact.

3. WTA opposes this bill.

C. AB165/SB113 – Town zoning fix regarding Hegwood v. Town of Eagle case:

1. Court system invalidated town administered general zoning in county shoreland zoning areas. Lack of regulation threatens orderly land uses and farmland preservation tax credits.
2. WTA and a broad coalition support this bill.

D. AB161/SB118 – Reform of cumbersome highway spending limitation:
   1. Much of § 82.03(2) proposed for elimination.
   2. WTA supports this bill.

E. AB199/SB137 – Legal notices on websites for Ch. 985:
   1. New option, not a new mandate, to post notice in one place and place on an internet site in situations where posting in three places is already allowed. Newspapers and associated requirements are unaffected.
   2. WTA supports this bill.

   1. Clarifies both local government authority to give and operator need to acquire permits from a highway’s maintaining authority in order to deploy hoses for the piping of manure in the highway right of way.
   2. Issue is a WTA legislative priority this session.

G. AB31/SB40 - setoffs against tax refunds for debts related to providing ambulance services.
   1. Uncollected charges from contracted ambulance services can be certified by local governments to be collected under the Dept. of Revenue’s Tax Refund Intercept Program.
   2. WTA supports this bill.

H. AB45/SB?? - authorizing towns to participate in multijurisdictional tax incremental financing districts.
   1. WTA supports this bill. Passed the assembly.

I. AB47/SB?? - membership of boards of commissioners established for public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts.
   1. Provides greater flexibility and clarifications.
   2. WTA supports this bill. Passed the assembly.

J. AB71/SB?? - aid payments on, and city, village, town, and county approval of, certain lands purchased by the Department of Natural Resources and restrictions on the purchase of land by the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands.
   1. This bill eliminates the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) ability to invest its money in the purchase of land. The BCPL administers a large number of loans to local governments such as towns with competitive terms and uses its revenues to fund school library materials.
   2. This bill gives a local government an up or down vote on a proposed DNR stewardship land purchase instead of just a non-binding vote to weigh in. However, any land purchased after June 30, 2015 would no longer result in any payments in lieu of taxes to local governments.
2. WTA opposes this bill. Referred to committee.

K. AB79/SB71 - allows municipal clerks to register voters on election day when not on the ballot. Also allows clerks to appoint special registration deputies to work at the polling place on election day without first obtaining a governing body resolution to that effect, similar to how the clerk appoints special registration deputies to register voters before the registration cut-off (20 days before voting.)

   1. WTA supports this bill.

L. AB164/SB121 – making several election law changes.

   1. Caucus process of candidate nominations may currently be set for any day between the first and last Tuesday in January. Bill proposes shortening that time to the first Tuesday in January until January 15th. WTA opposes this portion of the bill.

   2. Bills now amended to allow holding of the caucus from the first Tuesday in January until January 21.

M. AB156/SB134 - coverage for new participating employers under the Wisconsin Retirement System.

   1. Bill would allow a new option, not a mandate, to enter the WRS program for employers by allowing for new employees to enter it without mandating that all existing employees do so.

   2. WTA supports this bill.

N. LRB-0212 – allowing towns in Dane County to opt out of county zoning, official mapping and planning and removes county approval of plats and CSMs. As a separate issue, WTA supports creating a new, simpler process for towns statewide to have the periodic option to withdraw from county zoning. No activity as of yet on a statewide bill.

O. LRB-1634 – making some changes to the availability of extra-territorial zoning authority to cities and villages over towns.

P. LRB-1633 – elimination of “balloon-on-a-string” annexations.

Q. Requiring town comprehensive plans to be given fair consideration for inclusion into county plans. No activity as of yet.

R. Levy limit exemption for increases in fire and ambulance service costs. No activity as of yet.


T. AB58/SB47 – responding to a request for an absentee ballot.

   1. Clarifies that a clerk must respond to a request by sending a ballot and that they must do so within one business day.

   2. WTA supports this bill.

U. AB198/SB135 – making it illegal to use your cell phone, other than hands free, within any construction zone.

   1. WTA supports this bill.
V. LRB-0673 (Rep. Loudenbeck) – keeps fireworks permitting locally for use but ends local permitting being necessary for possession.

W. AB163/SB119 – adopting in parallel to the proposed state budget bill AB21/SB21 the reorganization of state agencies.

1. WTA is opposed to the portion of the this bill transferring regulatory oversight of POWTS from DSPS to DNR and also the proposed elimination of the Wisconsin Fund grant program to assist in the rehabilitation of failed or failing POWTS.

2. **The Governor has asked that these bills not be pursued.**

X. AB213/SB143 – permitting the staffing of an ambulance crew to contain only one EMT or above level of training to stay with the patient together with a first responder to drive.

Y. AB210/SB?? – proposed local referendum to approve 0.5% local sales tax to fund local highways.

**III. Other Bills that WTA is not directly lobbying on:**

1. AB14/SB8 – Regulation of Raffles.

2. **2015 Wisconsin Act 10** – taste samples of intoxicating liquor provided on certain retail licensed premises.

3. AB54/SB25 – Island town with village powers and shoreland zoning.

4. **2015 Wisconsin Act 19** – 70 mph maximum speed limit on freeways & expressways.

5. AB63/SB33 – Broadband expansion grant program. Expands potential applicants to include school districts, technical college districts and public library boards. Current law includes organizations, telecommunications utilities and municipalities.

6. **2015 Wisconsin Act 8** – the issuance of retail alcohol beverage licenses for premises on which another business is conducted and the presence of underage persons on premises operating under a retail alcohol beverage license.

7. AB32/SB49 - elimination of the requirement that laborers, workers, mechanics, and truck drivers employed on the site of a project of public works be paid the prevailing wage.

8. AB??/SB60 – taste samples of fermented apple cider provided by a winery.

9. AB??/SB63 – the presidential preference primary date.

10. AB28/SB66 – traffic control at nonfunctioning or malfunctioning traffic control signals.

11. AB115/SB123 – trust funds related to cemetery lots, mausoleum spaces, and cemetery merchandise.

12. AB105/SB72 – Relating to: groundwater management, approval of high capacity wells, and granting rule-making authority.

14. AB73/SB64 – changing the conditions under which a city or village may require the Department of Revenue to redetermine the value of the tax incremental base of a tax incremental district that is in a decrement situation.

15. AB116/SB81 - limiting the authority of a city, village, town, or county to create new occupational licenses or fees or to continue to regulate certain professions.


17. AB111/SB87 - inspection of certain renovations of one-family and two-family dwellings and requiring the exercise of rule-making authority.

18. AB124/SB96 - fees for election recounts. Currently if margin is less than 0.5% recount is free; if between 0.5% and 2% there is a $5/ward fee; if over 2% requestor pays actual cost. Change would be to free if under 0.25% margin and actual cost if above that, but if paying costs and recount changes the result the requestor gets their money back.

19. AB152/SB98 – disclosure of contracts for frac sand mining on neighboring properties.

20. AB149/SB99 - county authority relating to exploration for a type of industrial sand.

21. AB150/SB100 - listing frac sand mining as a conditional or prohibited use in certain types of zoning ordinances.

22. AB151/SB101 - notice requirements for zoning actions related to frac sand mining.

23. AB154/SB104 - the authority of a town and of a county to zone shorelands in a town that is located entirely on an island in Lake Superior and authorized to exercise village powers.

24. AB123/SB105 - limited authorization for the town of Rome in Adams County to make cash grants or loan subsidies to owners, lessees, or developers of land located in a tax incremental district created by the town.

25. AB157/SB110 - an exemption from civil liability related to the placement of buoys or other markers in waterways.

26. AB87/SB?? - state procurement of products and services from businesses located in this state and setting a goal for local government to purchase a certain percentage of products and services from businesses located in this state. Referred to committee.

27. AB108/SB?? - requiring a local governmental unit to create a civil service system with a just cause standard of discipline for its employees. Referred to committee.

28. **2015 Wisconsin Act 11** - laying out, altering, or discontinuing a town line highway. Codified language from a supreme court case clarifying this issue.

29. **2015 Wisconsin Act 12** - appealing a municipal court matter after review by a circuit court.

30. **2015 Wisconsin Act 13** – rescinded a statute providing for the incorporation of the Town of Ledgeview in Brown County that had been invalidated in court.

31. AB240/SB161 - electioneering at a retirement home or residential care facility.
32. AB249/SB182 - an exemption from licensing requirements for certain out-of-state ambulance service providers.

33. AB207/SB156 – eliminating the requirement that an authorized emergency vehicle's warning lights be activated as a condition of the exemption from traffic restrictions related to stopping, standing, and parking.

34. AB230/SB?? - requiring a municipal judge to be a licensed Wisconsin attorney.

35. AB20/SB176 - preference in state and local government contracts and procurement for materials manufactured in the United States.