

Legislative Update for APA – Wisconsin Chapter
1000 Friends of Wisconsin
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Bills introduced and JFC action on Working Lands.

New Bills Introduced:

[AB 139](#) Governmental Consolidation (Leg Council)

The bill creates a local governmental unit consolidation program, whereby a local governmental unit, or a combination of 2 or more local governmental units, may receive a loan to study or implement the consolidation, or cooperation for the provision, of local governmental unit services or the consolidation of local governmental units. The program is administered by the department of administration (DOA).

[AB 140](#) Exceptions to county and municipal levy limits and school district revenue limits for expenditures related to the implementation of service consolidation or cooperation (Leg Council)

This bill provides an exception from the levy limit for the amount that a city, village, town, or county levies to implement the consolidation, or cooperation for the provision, of one or more services, or to implement the consolidation of political subdivisions. The bill limits the amount of the exception to 0.1% of the amount upon which the limit is applied.

Also, this bill draft would provide an exception from the revenue limit for the amount that a school district expends, not to exceed 0.1% of the school district's budget, to implement the consolidation, or cooperation for the provision, of one or more services, or to implement the consolidation of school districts.

[Assembly Joint Resolution 41](#) Constitutional Amendment (first consideration) to amend the uniformity clause of the state constitution to allow for differential property tax rates for parts of cities, villages, towns, counties, and school districts added by attachments to school districts, consolidations, and boundary changes under cooperative agreements.

This proposed constitutional amendment, proposed to the 2011 legislature on first consideration, excepts from the requirement of the uniformity clause parts of cities, villages, towns, counties, and school districts added by attachments to school districts, by consolidations, and by boundary changes under cooperative agreements with other cities, villages, towns, counties, and school districts. The proposed constitutional amendment permits the governing body of the city, village, town, county, or school district to set different property tax levy rates on the parts for not more than 12 years, but the rates for each part must be uniform within that part.

The general statement of the Wisconsin Constitution that the "rule of taxation shall be uniform" is subject to other exceptions: real estate taxes may be collected in more than one way, and forests, minerals, agricultural land, undeveloped land, and certain kinds of personal property may be taxed differently than is other property.

In addition to the substantive changes, this joint resolution makes a stylistic change and breaks section 1 of article VIII of the constitution into subsections to facilitate future amendments and to avoid conflicts if other amendments to the section are proposed.

A constitutional amendment requires adoption by two successive legislatures, and ratification by the people, before it can become effective.

Joint Finance Action on Working Lands

PACE:

- The first round of 16 negotiated easements will be funded using not more than \$5.2 million of Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund bonding authority.
- Pace stays on the books, but is to undergo a study by DATCP including administration of the program, source of funding, state participation and local match. The motion also requires DATCP to include in the evaluation options "for a replacement program that would be less costly and more efficient for preserving farmland." DATCP is to report its findings to Joint Finance by June 30, 2012, and the standing committees in each house with responsibility for agricultural matters.

On the conversion fees:

- The committee voted to adopt the governor's recommendation to eliminate the fee.

The amendment passed 16-0 after an amendment by Sen. Sheila Harsdorf that would have set the conversion fees at one time the highest use value (rather than three, as is now the case) failed on a 6-10 vote.

Joint Finance will take up the Transportation Budget on Tuesday, May 24