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NEWS RELEASE:
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information:
Contact: Senator Robert Cowles ~ (608) 266-0484

Supporting the Residents of Hortonia

MADISON– Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement on two efforts he’s led to ensure that the residents of Hortonia are heard by Governor Tony Evers and the Department of Corrections (DOC) on the decision to put a Type 1 Juvenile Correctional Facility in the Town of Hortonia:

First, Senator Cowles submitted comments on DOC’s draft Environmental Assessment on this proposed site.

“I can’t think of a worse spot to put this facility from an environmental standpoint. Anyone who’s driven down Highway 15 in spring has seen the severity of the flooding on the Wolf River. This facility is being proposed to be built right in the floodplain. Additionally, with several endangered or threatened species and a host of ecological diversity nearby, potential wetlands on the site creating an unstable natural foundation for building, and a manure pit next door, this placement was not thought through well. Any conservationist should have serious concerns over this proposal to pave and build on this property. It’s my hope that the Administration doesn’t show continued indifference to these concerns.”

Also today, Senator Cowles provided amendment language for 2019 Assembly Bill 188 which was adopted during the Assembly Floor Session. This bill makes necessary changes to 2017 Wisconsin Act 185 that was passed to close Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools and replace them with regional facilities, including the proposed Type 1 Facilities in Hortonia and Milwaukee. The amendment, worked on by Senator Cowles, Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) and Representative Gary Tauchen (R-Bonduel), will, among other things, help to ensure proper local input by requiring approval by the local government for significant changes to the juvenile correctional facility and providing extended timelines for DOC notices of local hearings on these facilities.

“As we continue to contest this location, the unfortunate reality is that despite the Administration’s fumble of this announcement and failure to properly assess this decision, a juvenile correctional facility could still be built in Hortonia. Wherever these Type 1 Facilities are built, local leaders need to be included in discussions about these facilities moving forward. Evers’ DOC claims these facilities will look like a school or an office building. This amendment will ensure that residents near Type 1 Facilities will have their voices heard if the Administration tries to back-track and make these facilities look like a prison or unilaterally expand the facility. While Governor Evers’ office has said he doesn’t support this amendment to include local government in these decisions, I urge him to reconsider this stance and change course to work with, not against local elected leaders.”

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