



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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December 19, 2019

Secretary-designee Craig Thompson
4822 Madison Yards Way
P.O. Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910
<<Sent via e-mail>>

Dear Secretary-designee Thompson,

Earlier this month you convened a meeting of the Transportation Projects Commission (TPC). As Members of the Joint Finance Committee, we are deeply concerned over the new \$15 million cost overrun announced at that meeting for the Highway 23 project.

In October of 2018, former Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary David Ross announced the 4-lane expansion of Highway 23 would begin in the summer of 2019. At the time, the project was expected to cost \$150.5 million.

This year costs for the Hwy 23 project have steadily increased. Costs jumped by \$3 million in February and an additional \$3 million August. In August, DOT staff believed that the revised amount of \$156.5 million would be sufficient to cover "normal variances" for the project.

Unfortunately, at the most recent meeting of the Transportation Projects Commission the DOT announced an additional anticipated increase in "the \$15 million range" for the project. In other words, in less than a year expected project costs for Highway 23 have increased by nearly 14%, or \$21 million, to \$171.5 million.

During the 2019-21 budget process, the Joint Finance Committee voted to make historic investments in the Transportation Fund. However, this funding was not intended as a blank check to the department. Wisconsin motorists deserve to know that these new transportation dollars are being spent wisely.

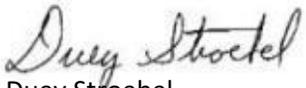
Since the Wisconsin DOT has a biennial budget exceeding \$6 billion, \$21 million in cost overruns may seem trivial. We are deeply concerned that this \$21 million increase for the Highway 23 expansion is not an anomaly, but a warning sign for future unwarranted increases in construction projects across Wisconsin. As you evaluate ongoing projects, please keep the concerns of Wisconsin taxpayers at the forefront.

Sincerely,

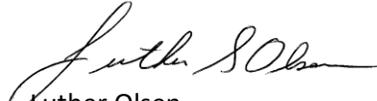
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State Senator
9th Senate District

Howard Marklein
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17th Senate District

Alberta Darling
State Senator
8th Senate District



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20th Senate District



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