

Evers Signs Bills to Keep Milwaukee Brewers, Major League Baseball in Wisconsin Through 2050

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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Improvements to American Family Field will be supplemented by excess administrative fee collections expected from the city of Milwaukee's sales tax.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today signed two bipartisan bills passed by the Wisconsin State Legislature, Assembly Bill 438, now 2023 Wisconsin Act 40, and Assembly Bill 439, now 2023 Wisconsin Act 41, to keep the Milwaukee Brewers and Major League Baseball (MLB) in Wisconsin through 2050. The bills were passed with broad, bipartisan support after months of collaboration and negotiations between the Office of the Governor, members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, the Brewers, Milwaukee County, the city of Milwaukee, and local stakeholders and partners. The governor previously [signaled his support](#) for both bills upon being passed by both chambers of the Wisconsin State Legislature last month.

“It’s a great day to be a Wisconsinite and a great day to be a Brewers fan as we finally reach the culmination of months of bipartisan work, collaboration, and negotiation on a plan to keep the Milwaukee Brewers in Wisconsin and ensure future generations will grow up rooting for the home team just as so many of us have,” said Gov. Evers. “I’ve always believed we’d find a way to get this done, and today is yet another great example of what we can accomplish when we work together, find common ground, and put politics aside to do what’s best for Wisconsin.



“Through months of hard work, we were able to reach consensus and find a compromise that safeguards taxpayers and taxpayer dollars, is supported by all involved parties, and ensures the Milwaukee Brewers remain here in Milwaukee through 2050,” Gov. Evers continued. “With billions of dollars in annual economic impact and hundreds of local, family-supporting jobs, I’m proud today to be signing these bills to ensure the Milwaukee Brewers will continue being a

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critical part of our state's future economic success and a defining part of our state's history and traditions for future generations."

The Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District (District) is charged with overseeing, operating, and maintaining American Family Field. The District's existing lease responsibilities to the Brewers require the District to manage American Family Field maintenance and improvements. Without an investment from the state, the District does not have the resources to meet existing contractual and legal obligations to maintain and update American Family Field, posing the imminent risk of Wisconsin losing the Brewers and its only MLB team. To avoid the threat of the Brewers and MLB leaving Milwaukee as soon as the conclusion of the 2030 season when the current lease with American Family Field expires, Gov. Evers in February first announced an initial proposal as part of his 2023-25 biennial budget proposal toward ensuring the Brewers remain in Milwaukee.

Ensuring professional baseball remains in Milwaukee and the ballpark is successful is crucial to supporting working families, local and state economies, and retaining jobs. Since opening its doors in 2001, the ballpark has generated \$2.5 billion in total economic output for the state. In 2022 alone, the ballpark supported 3,000 jobs. The Brewers and American Family Field also support more than 1,100 union jobs, including Brewers employees and union employees, through vendors and related services.

A summary of the bipartisan compromise to ensure the Milwaukee Brewers and MLB remain in Wisconsin through 2050 is available below.

[Assembly Bill 438](#), now 2023 Wisconsin Act 40:

- Among other provisions, specifies that before any state funding is awarded to the District, the District and the team must have entered both of the following:
 - A nonrelocation agreement that requires the team to play all of its home games at American Family Field during the term of the lease.
 - A lease agreement that:
 - Expires no earlier than Dec. 31, 2050.
 - Requires the team to make \$3,360,253 in annual contributions beginning in 2024 through 2045 for both the responsibilities of the District and renovations and improvements of baseball park facilities. Team contributions would increase to \$5,360,253 beginning in 2046 through 2050.
 - Requires the team to contribute a further \$50 million for stadium renovations and maintenance over the term of the lease, of which \$25 million must be contributed by Jan. 1, 2037.
- Reduces the size of the District's jurisdiction from the current five counties—Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Washington, and Waukesha—to only Milwaukee County;
- Replaces the current 13-member board with a new 13-member board consisting of: four persons appointed by the governor (including a chairperson); three persons appointed by the

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speaker of the Assembly; three persons appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; one person appointed by the governor from a list provided by the team; and two persons appointed by the governor from lists provided by each of the city of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County;

- Together with Assembly Bill 439, provides \$500.8 million in public funding over the term of the lease, including \$365.8 million in state funds and \$67.5 million in local contributions from both Milwaukee County and the city of Milwaukee. These contributions would go into a newly created stadium improvement segregated fund established by the District to be used by the District for stadium renovations;

- Beginning in 2024, requires Milwaukee County to contribute \$2.5 million annually into the stadium improvement fund until 2050, or until aggregate contributions reach \$67.5 million;

- Requires a ticket surcharge on nonbaseball events at the stadium. Over the course of the lease, the ticket surcharge is expected to provide \$20.7 million to the District; and

- Allows for the District to obtain up to \$35 million in short-term loans issued by the Wisconsin Department of Administration that could only be expended for major capital repairs, retractable roof maintenance and repairs, and necessary improvements to the stadium's facilities.

[Assembly Bill 439](#) , now Wisconsin Act 41:

- Establishes the appropriations needed to enact the state and local funding plan for improvements to American Family Field as primarily enabled by Assembly Bill 438;

- Reduces the administrative fee retained by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue for the state's administrative costs in collecting county sales taxes, keeping more local sales tax dollars in local communities; and

- Redirects excess administrative fee collections expected from the city of Milwaukee's sales tax (effective Jan. 1, 2023) to provide the city's contribution to American Family Field improvements and maintenance.