

SBC Republicans Reject Historic Investments in Infrastructure

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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State Building Commission **Republicans again obstruct Wisconsin infrastructure investments estimated to provide 45,000 family-supporting jobs, \$6.8 billion in economic impact.**

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today released a statement after Republicans on the State Building Commission (SBC) deadlocked the Commission on a 4-4 vote on every motion that included projects in the governor’s capital budget recommendations, rejecting the governor’s proposed nearly \$3.8 billion in investments in state infrastructure. Gov. Evers’ plan, released [last month](#), represented one of the strongest investments to date for Wisconsin’s facility infrastructure and included major projects in both Republican and Democratic legislative districts in 28 counties across the state. Additionally, the governor’s recommendations were expected to provide approximately 45,000 family-supporting jobs and an estimated \$6.8 billion in economic impact.



“Our capital budget addressed critical infrastructure needs across our state in a way that kept borrowing low, saved the taxpayer’s money in the long run, and created critical local jobs and economic development,” said Gov. Evers. “While Republican leaders claim to support these goals, their action today shows that they would simply rather play politics than have a meaningful discussion about how these projects would serve the needs of the folks they represent. Despite today’s unfortunate outcome, we will continue to fight for these projects as we work to invest in and build 21st century infrastructure in communities across our state.”

Republicans rejected important projects such as:

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- Continued investments in correctional facilities to further work towards closing Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake as juvenile facilities by completing the Milwaukee Type 1 facility and a new Type 1 facility on Department of Corrections-owned property in Oregon, the expansion of the Grow Academy in Oregon, and a study and plan for a third Type 1 facility in the Northeastern region;

- Significant investment of approximately \$1.8 billion for capital improvement projects through the University of Wisconsin (UW) System at campuses across the state. These projects include the Engineering replacement building at UW-Madison, the Eau Claire Science/Health Science Building phase II, and the Camp Randall Sports Center replacement at UW-Madison. In addition, numerous critical maintenance and repair projects at Central Utility Plants, replacement of deteriorating facilities such as the Humanities building and Music Hall at UW-Madison, and important renovation work to address deferred maintenance at key campus buildings at UW-Oshkosh and UW-Stevens Point, and many more;



- Upgrades to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King and purchasing the Wisconsin Veterans Museum location for future upgrades;

- Investments in state parks and forests and upgrades to Fire Response Ranger Stations;
- Investments in health services facilities, including utility infrastructure, support services, and patient care;
- Projects with federal support for Wisconsin National Guard facilities;
- Additional investment to complete the new Wisconsin History Museum; and
- Addressing the state's backlog of deferred maintenance by providing the largest investment to date for all state agencies, including the UW System, for small to mid-sized capital maintenance and repair projects across the state in the All Agency Program.

This action is a repeat of the same obstruction by Republican SBC members during the 2019-21 Capital Budget and the 2021-23 Capital Budget by abandoning the decades-old institutional tradition of recommending project requests with bipartisan support. Today's decision by Republicans on the Commission marks the third time in SBC records the Commission has failed to collaborate on a State Building Program. This action is contrary to the regular meetings when SBC members come together multiple times throughout the year to agree to provide authority to construct projects in the State Building Program.

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The complete 2023-25 Capital Budget agency requests and the governor's recommendations can be found [here](#). The SBC is chaired by Gov. Evers and made up of the following members:

- Sen. Robert Wirch;
- Sen. Joan Ballweg;
- Sen. André Jacque;
- Rep. Jill Billings;
- Rep. Rob Swearingen;
- Rep. Robert Wittke; and
- Barb Worcester, citizen member.