



Tony Evers

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 29, 2024

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I have approved Senate Bill 518 as 2023 Wisconsin Act 250 and have deposited it in the Office of the Secretary of State. I have exercised the partial veto with respect to section 3 as it relates to s. 238.145 (2)(a), (2)(c)2., (2)(e) and (2)(f).

This bill would create a program administered by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to award up to \$2 million to a political subdivision (defined as a city, village, town, or county) to assist in the costs of redevelopment of University of Wisconsin branch campus buildings and facilities that will no longer be used for an academic purpose. The bill appropriates \$20 million GPR to the Joint Committee on Finance supplemental appropriation for the program. Under the bill, grants must contribute to the overall economic improvement and enhancement of the community. The bill requires the political subdivision to: i) submit community letters of support for the grant, ii) match 20 percent of the grant amount from local sources, and iii) submit a report to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the Legislature detailing how grant amounts were spent. The bill also requires that the first award of up to \$2 million be made to Richland County, followed by awards of up to \$2 million to each of Fond du Lac, Washington and Marinette counties, before awards may be made to other political subdivisions. Further, the bill requires the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to request that the Joint Committee on Finance supplement the appropriation created by the bill upon receiving a grant application by a political subdivision if the corporation determines that the grant requirements are met. The corporation must submit separate requests for each grant to be awarded.

I have exercised the partial veto with respect to section 3 as it relates to s. 238.145 (2)(a), (2)(c)2., (2)(e) and (2)(f) to remove restrictive requirements that would: i) prohibit the use of grants for the redevelopment of facilities that are or will be used for academic purposes, ii) create the 20 percent matching requirement, iii) require that grants be made to select counties before grants may be made to other political subdivisions and iv) require the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation submit separate requests to the Joint Committee on Finance for each grant to be awarded because I object to these unnecessary and restrictive provisions.

I trust local partners to know what is best needed to support economic development in their own communities and they should have as much flexibility as possible to make the decisions necessary. For example, some communities may consider using these facilities for academic purposes in partnership with local school districts or technical colleges, and the state grant program should be open to these partnerships.



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I also am not interested in reinforcing the Wisconsin State Legislature's ongoing unconstitutional obstruction of basic government functions through delays at the Joint Committee on Finance. Similarly, I object to the requirements that a certain subset of counties must first receive their awards under the program before any others may receive funding, which could cause delays in certain counties receiving critical funds if the counties required to receive funding first do not submit grant applications in a timely manner. Under the bill, the maximum amount that could be awarded to Richland, Fond du Lac, Washington and Marinette Counties is \$8 million, but the remaining \$12 million could not benefit any other counties in the meantime. As modified by my partial veto, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation would still be required to award grants to these counties, but other counties could still submit applications to receive critical resources without experiencing unnecessary delays.

Additionally, I object to the requirement that the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation must submit separate requests for each individual grant to be awarded, again creating unnecessarily cumbersome process that could delay efforts at redeveloping these facilities.

I support the efforts by the Legislature and stakeholders to provide these critical investments to local communities being adversely affected by branch campus closures.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers
Governor