



# CALVIN CALLAHAN

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## Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 506

*Assembly Committee on Transportation*

November 17, 2021

Members of the committee, thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill (AB) 506. As we begin to move into the Wisconsin winter, we have a proposal before you that increases visibility for our highway workers and snow plow drivers. Through a simple change in state law, our snowplow drivers and other highway maintenance workers will be better protected and passing by motorists will be better equipped to foresee oncoming hazards.

As you have likely seen, county and municipal highway department vehicles are typically equipped with red or amber lights. However, studies have shown that blue and green lights are more visible than red or amber. While blue is reserved for law enforcement vehicles, in periods of low visibility, such as a snowstorm, flashing green lights would be an ideal replacement to the current red and amber lights.

The bill before you today allows, but does not require, any department of transportation, county, or municipal highway department vehicle to be equipped with green warning lights. Assembly Substitute Amendment (ASA) 1 not only expands the lamp colors to include green, but it also expands the allowable lamp configurations on the vehicle. Currently, state law allows for two lamps to be installed – one to the front of the vehicle and one to the rear. ASA 1 would allow for this configuration, as well as two lamps in the front of the vehicle and two to the rear.

Allowing for more effective, visible lights on our highway vehicles will help to prevent future injuries caused by crashes in low visibility situations. I hope to see your support on this important proposal.



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation

FROM: Daniel Bahr, Government Affairs Associate

DATE: November 17, 2021

SUBJECT: Support for Assembly Bill 506

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) supports Assembly Bill 506 relating to the use of green lights on highway maintenance vehicles. Currently, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) policy does not require or suggest adding green strobe lights to the warning systems of winter maintenance trucks operated by counties conducting winter maintenance activities. Assembly Bill 506 expands the lamp colors with which a Department of Transportation, county or municipal highway department vehicle may be equipped to include green. In addition, the bill expands the permissible lamp configurations to allow a vehicle to display either one lamp to the front and one lamp to the rear, or two lamps to the front and two lamps to the rear.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has been adding green strobe lights to the warning system of winter maintenance trucks (WMTs) since 2016. Results of research done by the Michigan Department of Transportation show that adding green lights with a single flash pattern to the amber warning light configuration improves the conspicuity significantly, while keeping the glare at an acceptable level relative to configurations using only amber warning lights. Using Green Lights on winter maintenance vehicles has proven to reduce glare and conspicuity in comparison to the use of Amber Warning Lights.

AB 506 is one in a series of bills that WCA is promoting to encourage safety in work zones and as part of an ongoing effort to protect our work zone employees. WCA supports AB 506 and thanks the committee members for their consideration.

Contact: Daniel Bahr, Wisconsin Counties Association, (608)-663-7188



# DANE COUNTY DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC WORKS, HIGHWAY and TRANSPORTATION

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Commissioner / Director  
Gerald J. Mandli

## Assembly Committee on Transportation

Representative Plumer (Chair)

Representative Spiros (Vice-Chair)

### Support of AB 508 - relating to: warning lamps on highway vehicles.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on AB 506, a bill to allow green warning lamps on vehicles. Dane County urges the committee to support this important change to state statute to improve visibility and help reduce collisions during the Wisconsin snow-plowing season.

Studies show that adding the green lamps can improve safety by making snow plows easier to see for the other vehicles on the road. The state of Michigan has been using green warning lamps since the law was changed to allow them in 2016. They released the results of a study in 2020 on the effectiveness of the green lamps and they found that adding the green lamps to the current amber lamps improved visibility and attracted the most attention from approaching motorists.

In addition, Dane County is about to deploy tow plows for snow removal. The plows are about 83 feet long and will cover about 22 feet, which is 2 lanes of traffic. The larger tow plows allow us to clear snow faster because they cover multiple lanes, but they need other drivers to allow them more room to get the job done safely. Allowing the use of the green lights would be an extremely useful warning as the driving public approaches these new vehicles they are not accustomed to seeing.

Thank you for considering this testimony as you evaluate AB 506. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this issue.

Commissioner/Director  
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