



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE
P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Labor, and Economic Development

Senate Bill 133

Senator Van Wanggaard and Representative Tony Kurtz

Good morning, and thank you, Chairman Feyen, and committee members for having this hearing today.

The State of Wisconsin and the Village of DeForest have a unique opportunity to enhance economic development and long-term infrastructure investment through targeted adjustments to TID Number 9.

TID Number 9 in DeForest was established as a mixed-use district in September 2017 to support local business growth and infrastructure improvements. Under current law, the district has a 20-year lifespan. Senate Bill 133 would extend the life of TID Number 9 to 30 years, allowing for continued tax increment allocations to support ongoing development initiatives.

Additionally, under existing state law, the total equalized value of taxable property within a new or amended TID cannot exceed 12% of the municipality's total equalized value. This bill would provide DeForest with a one-time exemption from the 12% limit.

These changes are critical as the Village of DeForest is actively working to attract a major employer looking to bring over 200 full-time jobs to the area. By providing the village with the necessary tools to extend and amend its TID, Senate Bill 133 will support job creation, private investment, and long-term economic growth. This approach aligns with previous bipartisan efforts to provide Wisconsin municipalities with the flexibility needed to drive local economic success.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify about this bill today and am happy to answer any questions. In addition, we have one of our Democratic co-authors here today to answer any specific questions related to the impacts on their district.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MAUREEN McCARVILLE

★ 42ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony of Representative Maureen McCarville

**Senate Committee on Government Operations, Labor and Economic
Development**
Senate Bill 133-April 24, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Feyen and Committee Members.

Thank you for having this public hearing. I would also like to thank Senators Wanggaard, Keyeski, and Tomczyk for authoring Senate Bill 133 with me.

As a coauthor of this legislation, I am happy to be here to advocate for providing DeForest the opportunity to extend the life of the Tax Incremental District (TID) 9 from twenty to thirty years.

TIFs have been a vital tool to the rapid expansion of economic development in the Village of DeForest. DeForest has been a careful manager of TIDs. Past and current TIDS have all been successful TIDs.

Under current existing state law, the total equalized value of taxable property within a new or amended TID cannot exceed 12% of the municipalities total equalized value. This bill would provide DeForest with a one-time exemption from the 12% limit.

The exemption for this TID will allow for improved infrastructure, increase property value, provide good paying jobs, and generate sales tax revenue. Amending TID 9 is the right move for DeForest and the great state of Wisconsin.

I strongly encourage you to join me in supporting Senate Bill 133.



VILLAGE OF DEFOREST

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Good morning, Chairman Feyen and members of the Committee. My name is Bill Chang and I am the Village Administrator in DeForest, Wisconsin. Next to me is Village President Jane Cahill Wolfgram, and together, we are here to register support for Senate Bill 133.

Senate Bill 133 provides the Village with the ability and opportunity to improve the functions of the interchange at County Highway V and Interstate 39/90/94. This intersection will need drastic improvements to circulate the anticipated traffic and to keep congestion off the interstate.

Senate Bill 133 makes exceptions to current statute so that the Village may first amend the TID boundary to include the interchange and parcels requiring the interchange improvement; and second, to provide an additional 10 years to allow for the tax increment to pay for the improvement. These exceptions are narrowly tailored for a one-time amendment to Tax Incremental District No 9 and are similar to previous exceptions made for other communities in Wisconsin when unique situations arise.

Currently, the Village is negotiating a public infrastructure cost share agreement with a national retailer whereby they are committed to financing the total project cost of \$15,000,000 but have requested a cost reimbursement commensurate to 3rd party use of the interchange. This retailer is positioned to bring 200 full-time permanent jobs and generate over \$30,000,000 in gross taxable sales per year from over 5,000,000 visitors annually. Their capital improvement investment in the community beyond the interchange project is estimated to be more than \$50,000,000.

This infrastructure improvement will also help other businesses and landowners in the area. Just to the southwest of the interchange, approximately 500,000 square feet of industrial development will be constructed this year and 500,000 more will be constructed over the next 3 years. To the southeast of the intersection, 298 residential units have been approved and are expected to be constructed over the next two years. Additionally, we have heard from a plethora of other developers and landowners waiting to make their business decisions

until they better understand if this interchange improved, and if this retailer ultimately builds in DeForest.

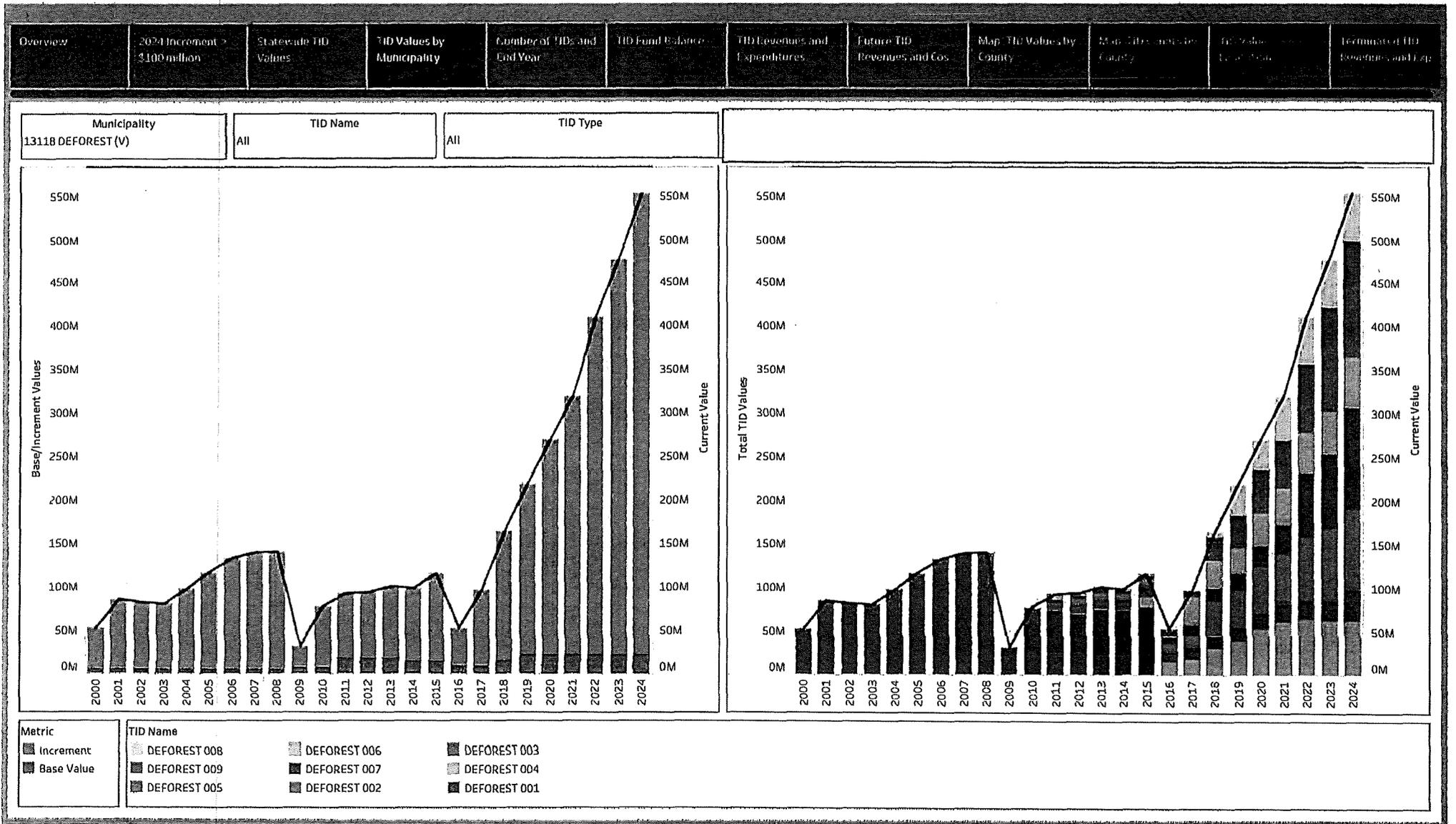
The interchange is adjacent to the Village's Tax Incremental District Number 9, which opened in 2017. Since 2017, the Village has had exponential growth within its tax increment districts, outpacing growth in other parts of the Village. For example, equalized values in TIDs in DeForest have grown from \$97M to \$554M (see Exhibit 1), an increase over 450%. Whereas in the rest of the Village, equalized value grew at 97% (see Exhibit 2- TIDOUT EV). This proportionately leaves the Village in a precarious situation of going from 8% of to over 23% percent in the same timeframe and is the reason why the Village is significantly over the 12% limit currently.

Of the 8 open Tax Incremental Districts currently, we forecast that 6 districts will close before their statutory deadline, returning approximately \$700 million of equalized value back to the taxing jurisdictions at closing. The Village expects to be back under the 12% requirement by 2030.

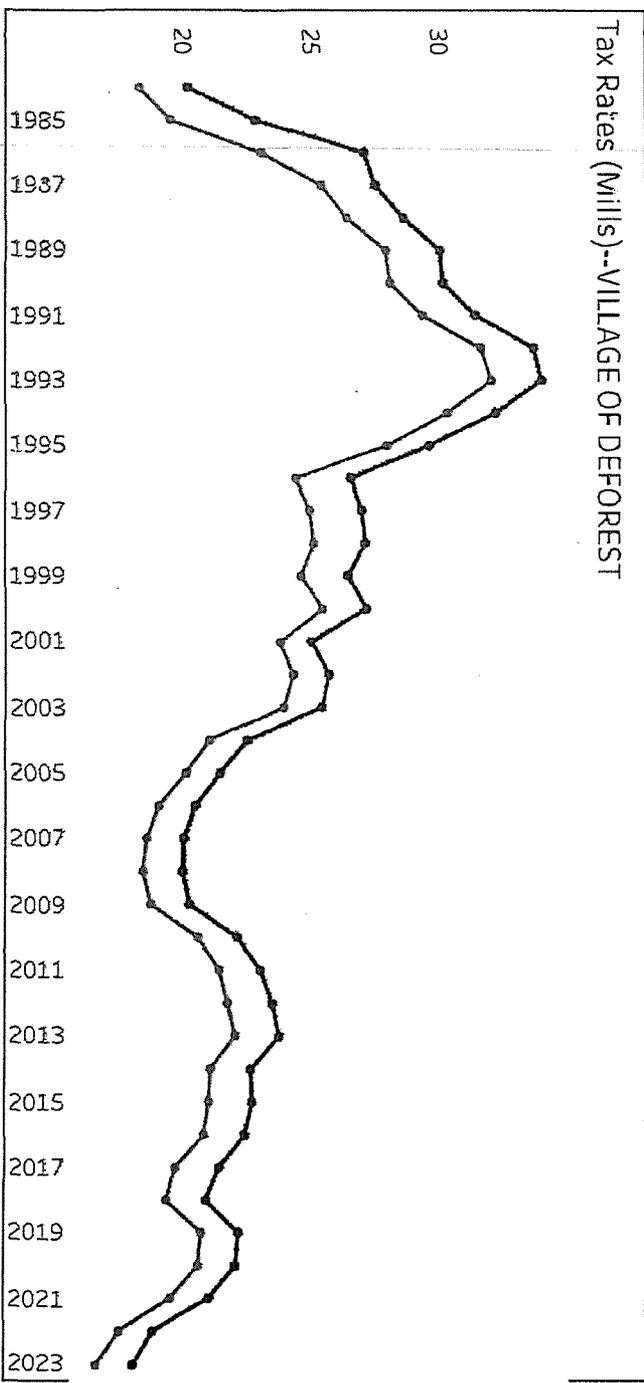
While this bill makes exception to rule, the Village of DeForest has been prudent and great stewards of its Tax Increment Districts. The Village protects its taxpayers by requiring development agreements to include provisions for guaranteed values and tax increments, that construction of public infrastructure benefiting developers be developer financed, and that incentives are paid to developers through pay-go bonds. This ensures that performance is met before payment is made. This has served the Village well and has reduced financial risks to the Village. We intend to continue these practices.

In closing we believe that Senate Bill 133 provides the necessary tools for the Village of DeForest to complement the growth of the community with the necessary public infrastructure. The bill is narrowly tailored for this single occasion. The Village has been and will continue to be responsible with public financing and will continue to put in measures to protect its taxpayers. The businesses that this project will support will bring over 200 jobs and significant increases to property value and sales tax revenue to the great State of Wisconsin. We strongly urge you to support and recommend passage for Senate Bill 133. Thank you.

EXHIBIT 1



Overview: Municipal Charts	Overview: County Charts	Overview: Data	Tax Rate and Equalized Value: Municipal Charts	Tax Rate Group	Tax Rate and Equalized Value: County Charts	Tax Rate and Equalized Value: County Charts
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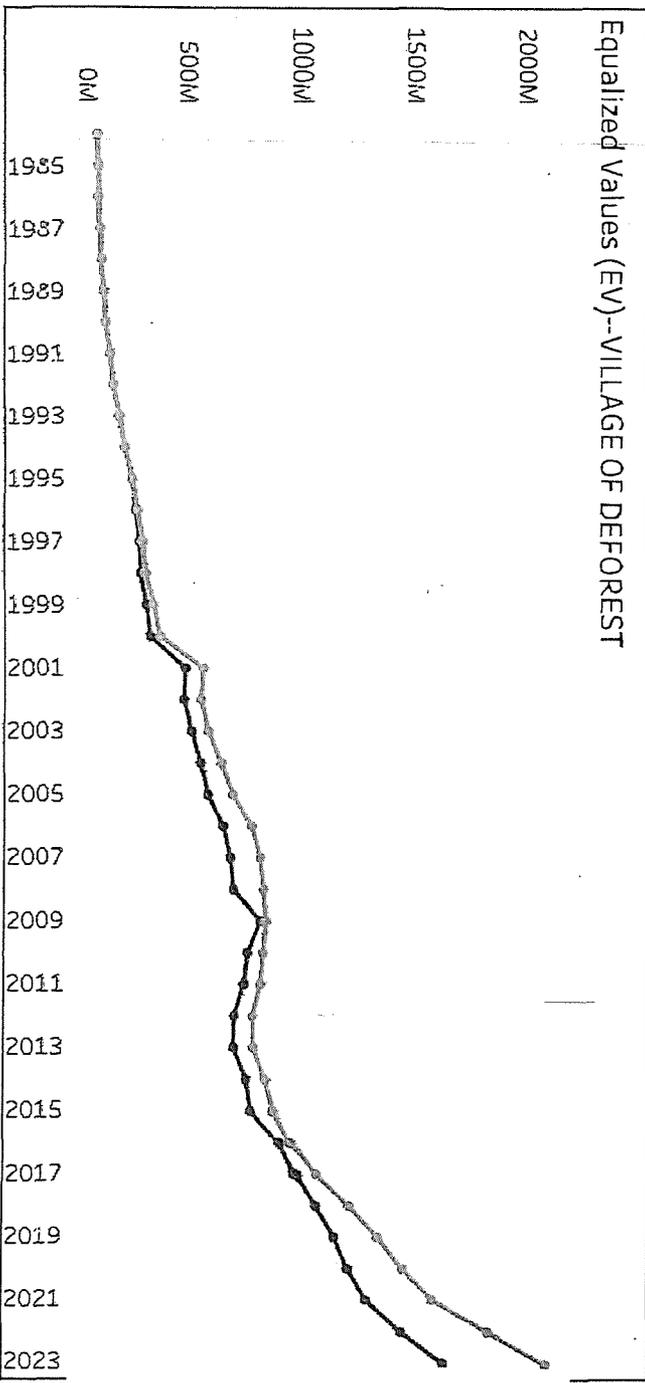


Municipality
VILLAGE OF DEFOREST

Municipal Code-County
13118-DANE

Tax Rates

- Gross Tax Rate (mills)
- Net Tax Rate (mills)



Equalized Values (EV)

- EV TTD-IN
- EV TTD-OUT

Public Hearing Testimony on Senate Bill 133

Committee on Government Operations, Labor, and Economic Development

Presented by Bernard L. Coxhead

Date: April 24, 2025

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bernard L. Coxhead. I am a 30-year resident of the Village of Deforest and a retired public administration professional. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today in strong opposition to Senate Bill 133.

SB 133 is a profoundly flawed proposal lacking short-term and long-term accountability. It authorizes the Village of Deforest to continue a pattern of unsustainable borrowing and speculative development, leveraging future tax revenues to finance present-day risks, without any secured return on investment. This is not responsible governance. Fiscal negligence is disguised as economic development.

As you know, it's not what a bill says—it's what it *does*. And this bill enables Deforest to expand its already staggering \$62 million TID obligations, using public dollars to subsidize private ventures like the proposed Buc-ee's development, without an independent economic impact study and with no assurances of tangible benefits for taxpayers.

Let me be clear: this is not how TIDs or TIFs were intended to function. The original purpose was to revitalize truly blighted areas, not to serve as vehicles for corporate giveaways or real estate speculation. Yet SB 133 opens the door for just that. It greenlights the use of TID proceeds to fund consultants, engineers, and local staff, while leaving the school district and taxpayers to absorb the long-term costs. Just last year, the Deforest Area School District had to pass a referendum simply to cover basic operational expenses—expenses exacerbated by the loss of tax base due to these very TID diversions.

Further, the \$6 million interchange "improvement" demanded by this corporate development is not a public necessity but a private convenience. It is unacceptable to ask Deforest residents to subsidize infrastructure that serves corporate interests without a clear, measurable public benefit.

This bill exemplifies everything wrong with speculative budgeting: opaque processes, overleveraged borrowing, and no future accountability for today's decisions. I urge this committee to vote **no** on Senate Bill 133—at the very least, until comprehensive, unbiased data and genuine public transparency are brought into the discussion.

In the interim, I refer your attention to the attached "Fiscal Estimate Analysis" before you vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Bernard L. Coxhead
809 Liberty Drive Deforest, WI 53532

ATTACHED ANALYSIS: FISCAL ESTIMATE COMMENTARY

Subject: Critical Review of Fiscal Estimate for SB 133 / Associated TID Amendment Proposal – Village of Deforest - Bernard L. Coxhead, Deforest, WI 53532

Have You Actually Read This Fiscal Estimate?

The fiscal estimate attached to this bill is, at best, incomplete and, at worst, deliberately misleading.

- **No Project Information Provided:** The estimate does not describe or identify the actual development project in question—namely, the infrastructure improvements allegedly demanded by the Buc-ee’s Corporation as a condition of locating in Deforest. No real disclosure of those facts has been forthcoming yet.
- **Claim of “No Fiscal Impact”:** This claim is patently false. The proposed amendment to the TID would authorize financing of infrastructure improvements over a 30-year horizon, directly violating the intent and spirit of the statutory borrowing caps currently in place for Tax Incremental District (TID) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) projects.
- **No Assessment of Long-Term Fiscal Implications:** The estimate makes no mention of long-term debt service, local service obligations, or the net public costs over the life of the project. It ignores critical impacts to taxpayers, municipal risk, or shifts in shared revenue.
- **Backdoor Facilitation of Highway Project:** If approved, this amendment will serve as a tool to “assist” the advancement of Governor Evers’ bloated \$6 million highway interchange project ahead of schedule. This interchange, previously considered non-essential within DOT planning, would now be expedited exclusively to benefit the Buc-ee’s project—with Deforest taxpayers footing the bill long before any significant tax revenue is generated.
- **Rushed Process, No Mention of Buc-ee’s in Committee:** The Assembly committee moved this bill forward without even acknowledging the Buc-ee’s development on the public record—despite it being the clear and primary driver of the proposal. This deliberate omission prevented full vetting of the actual project and left the public and legislators in the dark.
- **Speculative Gains, Disproportionate Burdens:** While Dane County may claim a projected \$1 million in annual gains—if you accept the questionable assumptions underpinning this estimate—DeForest’s net tax benefit is projected at just \$164,000 annually. In return, Deforest will assume responsibility for delivering all necessary municipal services to support this massive retail operation. That’s a high-risk exchange of obligations for marginal return.

Conclusion:

This fiscal estimate is entirely inadequate to justify passage of the bill. It fails to meet basic standards of transparency, omits critical project context, and ignores future fiscal liabilities. It reads more like a smoke screen than a serious financial disclosure. Legislators should demand a full, independent review before moving forward.

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DOR 3/21/2025

LRB Number	25-2363/1	Introduction Number	SB-0133	Estimate Type	Original
Description maximum life and allocation period for Tax Incremental District Number 9 in the village of DeForest and the total value of taxable property that may be included in tax incremental financing districts created in the village of DeForest					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

Under current law, the unextended termination of TID number 9 in the village of DeForest is 20 years. Under the bill, the life of TID number 9 is extended, and tax increments may continue to be allocated for up to 30 years after the TID's creation in 2017. Under current law, the equalized value of taxable property of a new or amended TID plus the value increment of all existing TIDs in a city or village may not exceed 12 percent of the total equalized value of taxable property in the city or village. Under the bill, the 12 percent rule does not apply to one amendment of the project plan of TID number 9 in DeForest, and DeForest may not exercise a housing stock improvement with regard to TID number 9.

The fiscal effect is indeterminate as the department does not have any project information or data on the proposed amendment of TID number 9. For 2024, DeForest had a total equalized value of \$2,272,058,000. DeForest currently has 8 TIDs with a combined current value of \$553,963,400 and a combined increment value of \$530,952,400. TID number 9 was created in 2017 along with TID number 8. Of the other existing TIDs, 3 were created in 2009, 1 in 2010, and 2 in 2011. DeForest is currently over the 12 percent limit at 23.37 percent. Under current law, DeForest cannot amend TID number 9 without terminating a current TID, subtracting territory, or waiting until the values fall below the 12 percent limit.

The bill will not affect the increments for existing tax increment districts.

The department's computer software can accommodate this special TID without any additional programming changes and administrative costs.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications

