



Stockbridge-Munsee Community

Economic Support Department
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Friday, July 08, 2011

Representative Jeff Mursau, Chairman,
State Legislative Council
Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations
One East Main Street, Suite 401
PO Box 2536
Madison, WI. 53701-2536

Dear Chairman Mursau,

As a member of the Special Committee, I would like to respectfully request an item for Committee discussion for the next meeting agenda.

Issue:

There exists inadequate funding for Tribal Elderly Transportation services, which causes many Elders a barrier in accessing needed preventive medical care, prescription medication access, and access to social and other aging services.

History:

Our Elders possess unique and irreplaceable stores of knowledge, skill, and experience that enhance and enrich the lives of the entire Community. The interests of the Community, now and in the future, are advanced when our Elders remain confident they are free to fully participate in the activities and proceedings of the Community.

The proven health disparities of many of our rural communities dictate the need for transportation for the Elders and the Disabled. The current escalation of fuel costs is devastating our ability to provide this much needed service. The Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe alone funds over \$200,000 towards this much needed service.



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One of the most economically disadvantaged, remotely located, and often health-challenged segments of the population has the most difficulty accessing medical care, partly due to transportation problems. Both the Tribes and the State of Wisconsin realize the immense cost burden which will surely arise for the State in the form of higher healthcare needs in the future should these transportation issues remain unresolved. Keeping members off Medical Assistance programs should be our long-term strategic plan.

Proposal:

To eliminate the need to request any additional funds from a State budget already very lean, I propose the Committee consider recommending the use of Segregated Wisconsin Department of Transportation funds existing currently for roads and other transportation means be moved to Tribal Elderly Transportation in the amount of \$1,000,000 to equally assist all Wisconsin Tribes annually. Although I realize our State roads need patching and materials such as culverts, I propose the use of these funds for enhancement of services to human services (Elderly transportation) be a consideration to reduce future cost burdens to the State in the form of healthcare expenses later, and to the Tribes from loss of one of our most valued group of Tribal members.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregg W. Duffek, Public Member of the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations

Copy to: David Lovell, Senior Analyst