



May 3, 2017

Dear Wisconsin State Legislator:

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Towns Association, and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards urge you to support the dark store bill, LRB-0373, that Rep. Rob Brooks and Sen. Roger Roth are currently circulating for co-sponsors. The bill is modeled after similar legislation that the state of Indiana passed in 2016. It will ensure that the dark store tax strategy being used by big box retail chains to cut their property tax bills in half in Michigan and other states does not take hold in Wisconsin. If this bill is not enacted and the dark store strategy wins in Wisconsin courts, the result will be a significant tax shift from commercial to residential property tax payers. Homeowners already bear a disproportionate share of the property tax burden (68%).

It is important to emphasize that if this bill is enacted local governments will not receive one dollar more in tax revenue. Enactment will, however, prevent even more of the tax burden from being shifted to homeowners.

The bill clarifies that when assessors use sales of comparable properties for determining the value of a property they must use properties that are within the same market segment and similar to the property being assessed with regard to age, condition, use, type of construction, location, design, and economic characteristics. The bill explicitly provides that assessors may not use a dark store as a comparable for property that is not dark or vacant.

The state's local government associations have prepared the attached packet of background information on why the dark store legislation is necessary. We urge you take a look at the information and then sign on to the dark store bill and help stop more of the property tax burden from being shifted to homeowners.

If you have any questions or need more information please give any of us a call.

Sincerely,

Curt Witynski, J.D.  
Assistant Director  
League of Wis. Municipalities

Kyle Christianson  
Gov. Affairs Director  
Wis. Counties Assoc.

Mike Koles  
Exec. Director  
Wis. Towns Assoc.

Dan Rossmiller  
Gov. Affairs Director  
Wis. Assoc. of School Boards