



JULIE LASSA

STATE SENATOR

Testimony on Senate Bill 555
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Local Government
Wednesday, February 19, 2014
330 Southwest

Thank you, Chairman Gudex, and fellow committee members for holding a public hearing today on Senate Bill 555, which Representative Krug and I have introduced on behalf of the Village of Biron in southeastern Wood County. The bill will permit Biron to transfer surplus increment from its Tax Incremental Financing District 2 to its TID 3, in order to help revitalize and diversify the area's economy.

Thanks to the location of successful business enterprises there, Biron has been fortunate to see substantial growth in its TID 2, which will generate a projected \$2.8 million in excess increment through the final 13 years of its life. The Village wants to capitalize on that success by using the surplus to help jump start the development of TID 3, which will be the home of a 230 acre business park. While statutes permit the transfer of excess increment between TIDs, the properties involved must be determined to be blighted, which is not the case here. This bill is narrowly drafted to impact only these two TIDs.

Biron is one of the many small communities in Central Wisconsin that have been negatively impacted by the decline of the paper industry there. Fortunately, many of these communities have been proactively addressing this situation by attracting new business and diversifying their economies. Biron's new business park is an example of these efforts. The park is a public/private partnership with a private property owner. Unfortunately, regulatory challenges delayed the groundbreaking on the first phase of this project until just recently. The transfer of surplus increment from TID 2 to TID 3 will enhance the ability of the village to arrange financing to accelerate the development of infrastructure for the business park so that it can quickly become an attractive magnet for new economic activity and job growth.

Senate Bill 555, and its companion, Assembly Bill 723, will help the Village of Biron extend the success of its community development efforts and make an investment that will benefit the taxpayers and residents of Biron and provide a boost to the economy of Wood County. The Assembly companion was reported out of the Committee. I'm glad to have partnered with Representative Krug to introduce it, and I hope you will give it your support.