



Wisconsin Council on Forestry

Tony Evers, Governor
CouncilOnForestry.wi.gov

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Matt Dallman
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Buddy Huffaker

James Kerkman

Rebekah Luedtke

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Shankland

Rep. Jeffrey
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Juris Repsa

Dr. Adena
Rissman

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Sen. Jeff Smith

Sen. Romaine
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Dr. William Van
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To: Hillary Pelton
ARIP Program Manager
hillary.pelton@dot.wi.gov

As a Council representing Wisconsin's forestry community, we are writing to thank you for making the critically needed investment in Wisconsin's rural infrastructure with the Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP). As you may know, agriculture and the forest industry are respectively the state's number one and number two economic drivers.

While the first \$150 million will be a tremendous help supporting rural infrastructure, the number and quality of applications strongly indicates the continued need for this funding tool. In round one with \$50 million available, there were 153 eligible applications received with the state cost share of ninety per cent valued at \$226.8 million. Of those requests, thirty-seven projects were awarded with a cost-share value of \$49.8 million. In round two with \$100 million available, a total of 220 eligible applications were received with a cost-share value of \$333.5 million. Round two projects are still under review and have not yet been awarded. With round two cost-share fund requests in excess of \$560.3 million, it clearly shows the need for continuation of the ARIP program to support the rural infrastructure for forestry, agriculture, and Wisconsin's rural economy and prosperity.

Wisconsin has an impeccable record when it comes to sustainable forest management and healthy forests. These healthy forests supply clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities with an immeasurable positive social impact on Wisconsin residents and visitors from around the globe.

Healthy forests depend on a healthy forest products industry, and a healthy industry requires an efficient and effective transportation infrastructure. Without the support of programs such as ARIP to keep Wisconsin's forest industry healthy our forests risk the decline being seen in states where there is no longer a forest industry to facilitate sustainable forest management.

For these reasons the Wisconsin Council on Forestry thanks you for your past and continued support of Wisconsin's forest industry through extending the ARIP program into the future.

Sincerely,

Thomas Hittle
Chair, WI Council on Forestry

*Please note that due to the nature of their public positions, Council members Representatives Jeffrey Mursau and Katrina Shankland, Senators Romaine Quinn and Jeff Smith, State Forester Heather Berklund, and Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest Supervisor Jenn Youngblood abstain as signatories.