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1000 Friends of Wisconsin Decries Latest Move to Kill Transit

1000 Friends of Wisconsin today lashed out at the latest move by majority Republicans in the legislature to kill transit.

The Republican majority on the Joint Finance Committee today voted to repeal the Regional Transit Authority authorizing legislation. This pre-emption of local control removes the ability of communities to raise funds to pay for transit services that will be lost because of state and federal transit aid cuts.

“The removal of Regional Transit Authorities is just the latest move by this legislature to kill transit in Wisconsin. It is an unnecessary move that will ensure that thousands of transit dependent workers will be disconnected from their jobs,” said Steve Hiniker, Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.

While the governor and the legislature are quick to add hundreds of millions of dollars for new roads, they are just as quick to slash aids for cost effective commuting options. So far the Governor and the Republican majority in the legislature have:

- Cost communities in the state \$46 million in lost federal transit aids because of anti-labor provisions in the state budget “repair bill”
- Cut state aids to transit by 10% in 2012
- Taken the transit aids out of the Transportation fund and placed them in the General Fund where they will face competition from other programs
- Frozen local levy limits that means that local government cannot make up for the loss in state and federal aids
- Taken away the ability to create Regional Transit Authorities that could help fund transit services.

“Since taking office in January, majority Republicans have undertaken a concerted effort to kill transit in Wisconsin. Their antipathy towards transit will make it more expensive and difficult for many workers to get to their jobs. It will also take away affordable commuting options for countless other Wisconsinites who will soon have no option but to pay \$4 a gallon for gas to get to work,” Hiniker added.

“Wisconsin would be more competitive if legislators recognized that different communities have different needs for transportation. Unfortunately, the current administration and legislature has chosen to make transit a partisan issue, seeking to capture votes at the expense of the transportation needs of communities across Wisconsin,” concluded Hiniker.

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