

FAQS

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the problem this legislation is seeking to solve?

- » There is a great need to provide property tax relief to Milwaukee County taxpayers. Milwaukee County and its municipalities rely heavily on property taxes to fund necessary services and operations. In fact, **Wisconsin municipalities have the 7th highest reliance on property taxes in the country.**

There is also a **critical need to increase funding for Milwaukee County and its municipalities.** As a result, we are asking the Wisconsin State Legislature to pass legislation that would allow us to hold a binding referendum, in which we can ask Milwaukee County voters to decide if Milwaukee County should increase its sales tax by 1 percent.

What is the legislation proposing?

- » If authorized by Milwaukee County voters through a binding referendum, an additional 1 percent sales tax would be enacted in Milwaukee County. It would **generate around \$160 million annually, capturing revenue from visitors and non-County residents and bringing property tax relief to residents.** A minimum of 25 percent of the revenue generated would be set aside for property tax relief, and the remaining revenue would be split between Milwaukee County and its 19 municipalities to meet critical needs.

Why is state legislation required?

- » Milwaukee County cannot implement a sales tax increase without securing approval from the State Legislature.

How much does Milwaukee County send to the State of Wisconsin compared to how much is returned to Milwaukee?

- » Milwaukee County taxpayers sent \$569 million more to the state in 2018 than they did in 2009. In contrast, the state returned \$144 million less to Milwaukee County and its 19 municipalities in 2017 than it did in 2009.

Why raise the sales tax instead of using other sources of revenue?

- » No other potential source of additional new revenue provides the ability to generate the needed revenue while providing property tax relief.

How much revenue would be generated by a one percent sales tax increase?

- » A one percent sales tax increase is projected to raise about \$160 million annually.

How much of the new revenue would go to property tax relief?

- » The legislation calls for a minimum of 25 percent of the \$160 million, or \$40 million, to go to property tax relief.

Does the business community support this idea?

- » Yes. There is support for this proposal from both the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC) and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC).

The leadership of these business organizations recognize that **this proposal gives Milwaukee the certainty to plan for and execute a sound fiscal future that will make the greater Milwaukee area an even better place to invest capital, create jobs and attract and retain talent.** Providing the ability for cities and the county invest in their future – reducing property tax, reducing debt and addressing critical infrastructure improvements – is good business practice.