



# **City of Milwaukee 2015-16 Federal Legislative Priorities**

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**The following document represents the City of Milwaukee’s federal legislative priorities for the 114<sup>th</sup> Session of Congress. For more information, please contact City of Milwaukee Intergovernmental Relations Staff:**

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## **Major Federal Priorities**

### **Provide More Direct Appropriations of Federal Funds to Local Governments**

Urban areas are currently shortchanged by many state governments in the distribution of pass-through funds. We would like to see more federal resources targeted directly to local governments, thereby enabling the administration to work more closely with local leaders who share the President's priorities. Milwaukee would greatly benefit from the creation of a direct revenue sharing program with the 50 largest city governments in the US.

### **Increase Investment in Aging Infrastructure Replacement and Transportation Projects**

Our nation's largest cities are the hubs of US economic activity. We are challenged by the age and replacement needs of our roads, sewers, and other infrastructure which are relied upon by the largest concentration of residents and businesses. Continued funding for programs like ARRA and TIGER grants will improve our ability to support their needs.

### **Continue Funding Current Grant and Direct Appropriation Programs to Cities**

With the goal of deficit and spending reductions by many in Congress, it is important for the City to fight to maintain federal funding of over \$150 million that the City currently receives each year from federal agencies. Milwaukee's residents depend on the vital services that these grants and programs support and it is important that Milwaukee continues to receive its fair share of federal resources.

### **Redirect Federal Spending Priorities from Foreign Military Interventions to Domestic Needs**

Critical urban needs to address economic and social challenges such as affordable and quality housing, health care, education, poverty mitigation, and programs that serve veterans and returning military families should be a priority. Taxpayers in the City of Milwaukee pay over \$700 million in federal taxes each year and are in desperate need of more federal support.

### **Invest in the Fresh Coast Concept to Further Milwaukee's Up and Coming Status as a World Leader in Freshwater Science and Industry**

Milwaukee is a national leader in freshwater sciences and industry through our location on the Great Lakes, the concentration of freshwater related businesses, and the expansion of the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences. The City should actively pursue federal legislation and opportunities that will capitalize upon and increase our standing as a national hub for freshwater science and industry.

### **Increase Opportunities for International Trade at Milwaukee's Port and Expand International Connections with Urban Centers of Economic Activity**

The International Trade Administration can help international companies connect with urban areas according to their market assets and strategic advantages. With the size and strategic location of the Port of Milwaukee and our freshwater resource capacity, the City is in a unique position to capitalize upon efforts at the federal level to expand international trade and business location in industries that can benefit from our assets.

### **Strengthen Local Manufacturing Clusters through Federal Research and Investment**

Milwaukee's food and beverage, energy and power controls, and water manufacturing sectors are strong and growing. Strategic investments in these industries through programs like the National Network for Manufacturing Institutes and the investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership can be a catalyst for regional economic and job growth.

## **Federal Priorities - United States Congress**

### **Fiscal Stability**

- Protect the tax exempt status of municipal bonds.
- Create a two year window for the return of tax-exempt pension obligation borrowing for state and local government pension plans.

### **Economic Development**

- Through the US Army Corps of Engineers, require the Harbor Maintenance Tax to be used to address the backlog of Great lakes ports dredging projects and fund accordingly.
- Provide additional economic and tax incentives to encourage increased exports.
- Reauthorize the New Markets Tax Credits program.
- Reauthorize the charter of the Export-Import Bank.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

- Provide additional funding for the construction of new Compressed Natural Gas fueling stations, vehicles, and maintenance.
- Promote a renewable portfolio standard.
- Increase funding for municipal energy efficiency programs.
- Support states in adopting extended producer responsibility measures to induce manufacturers to assist in the recycling of their products.

### **Infrastructure**

- Fund public works programs that put people back to work and improve the nation's infrastructure.
- Make additional funds available for the Safe Drinking Water Loan Fund.

### **Community Investment**

- Preserve and expand the Community Reinvestment Act.
- Exempt non-profit community development corporations from the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008.
- Re-establish the Renewal Communities tax credit program.
- Expand eligibility for the National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program to borrowers at risk of losing their home to tax foreclosure.
- Increase regulation of non-bank mortgage servicers.

### **Public Safety**

- Support legislation to close loopholes concerning firearms background checks and support President Obama's plan to reduce gun violence.

### **Community Health**

- Oppose any repeal of the Affordable Health Care Act.
- Extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program.

### **Other**

- Support immigration reforms that include a path toward citizenship.
- Support a constitutional amendment promoting transparency in spending on elections and limiting corporate influence, thereby reversing the Citizens United decision.
- Provide a mechanism for funding public, educational, and government access channels.

## **Federal Priorities - By Agency**

### **Department of Transportation**

- Provide direct funding for large urban transportation projects, such as the reconstruction of Milwaukee's Lake Interchange.
- Prioritize funding for new urban rail projects through programs like TIGER, Small Starts and the proposed Accelerated Capital Project Fund to help extend the Milwaukee Streetcar.
- Adopt a "fix-it-first" policy for future transportation infrastructure improvements.
- Continue, sustain, and direct federal investment into local mass transit to provide access to jobs throughout the region. Provide additional separate funding streams for rail transit that do not compete with bus transit.
- Include sewer lateral repairs as part of future federally funded infrastructure programs.
- Eliminate the restriction on using US DOT funds for local street (non-collector/arterial) projects.
- Provide increased funds for CMAQ and STP for local street and congestion mitigation needs in urbanized areas.
- Adjust transportation project oversight to speed up and simplify the design process, and to move more funds away from engineering and into construction.
- Support additional funding for local harbor equipment and improvements.
- Support expanded funding for federal highway aid.
- Support a FHWA freeway design exception being requested by WisDOT for the I-94 Hawley Rd exit.

### **Department of Housing and Urban Development**

- Restore additional funding for Community Development programs including CDBG, HOME, ESG and HOPWA.
- Fund an additional round of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.
- Support funding for the National Housing Trust Fund.
- Expand the use of the HOME Investment Partnership Act to allow funds to be used for public housing units.
- Obtain a Promise Zone designation.

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

- Concentrate federal freshwater research and investment in Milwaukee
- Continue funding the Lake Michigan Czar
- Increase funding for Brownfield Remediation programs
- Protect the Great Lakes from invasive species
- Fund climate adaptation programs
- Loosen the eligibility criteria for the Safe Drinking Water Loan Fund to allow large utilities to have greater access to the fund
- Continue enforcement of the Clean Air Act and focus on the reduction of greenhouse gas pollution

### **Department of Labor**

- Increase funding for youth training and summer youth employment programs
- Provide direct funding for transitional jobs to cities with populations greater than 500,000 and

unemployment rates greater than 120% of the national average.

#### **Department of Commerce**

- Continue to fund the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program.
- Provide funding for Milwaukee's 30<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Corridor including infrastructure improvements, workforce training, business incentives, investment in multi-family housing, and alternative energy resources.
- Support and fund the Aerotropolis concept (re-investment around General Mitchell International Airport after the 440<sup>th</sup> air refueling wing was closed by DOD)
- Support programs that increase manufacturing jobs

#### **Department of Agriculture**

- Invest in urban farming and the promotion of fresh foods in impoverished areas
- Provide federal assistance for Emerald Ash Borer inoculation and control
- Continue funding the Federal Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program.

#### **Department of Energy**

- Provide support for municipal-led Energy Efficiency financing programs.
- Designate the Milwaukee region and Midwest Energy Research Consortium as the next National Manufacturing Institute for Smart Energy Manufacturing.

#### **Centers for Disease Control**

- Provide additional funding for HIV prevention.
- Fund our CDC approved bioterrorism preparedness laboratory which covers SE WI and provides back-up for Chicago and Madison.
- Support the efforts of the CDC's Division of Violence Prevention to address youth violence in Milwaukee.

#### **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau**

- Require mortgage lenders to undertake some form of pre-foreclosure financial analysis to reduce the number of foreclosure cases that are brought, or the number of foreclosure cases that stall after being brought.
- Require public access to per-parcel mortgage servicing information.
- Prevent a new foreclosure case from being filed in replacement of an existing case simply because there is a change in servicer for the note in default.

#### **Homeland Security/FEMA**

- Increase funding for Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grants.
- Restore funding for local UASI grants or an alternative emergency management program. Provide minimal annual funding for the 34 urban areas, including Milwaukee, that are no longer funded.

### **Department of Health and Human Services**

- Continue support for employer wellness programs in the Affordable Care Act.
- Support continued funding for the WIC, home visiting, and lead reduction programs.
- Provide funding for Responsible Fatherhood grants.

### **Army Corps of Army Engineers**

- Increase dredging of Great Lakes harbors.
- Support efforts to prevent invasive species, specifically Asian Carp, from entering the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence ecosystem.

### **Department of Education**

- Increase direct support to public libraries including the Library Services Technology Act funds.
- Continue to support the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- Continue to support the E-rate program.
- Provide additional support for new early childhood literacy programs.
- Support the My Brother's Keeper initiative.

### **Department of Justice**

- Increase funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services grants (COPS).
- Increase funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance grants (JAG).
- Support the efforts of, and additional funding for the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention.
- Expand funding for transition and prisoner re-entry mentoring projects and pathways to high school completion.
- Create a federal database of police shootings and custody death.
- Create a standardized federal survey tool to measure citizen approval levels of police departments nationwide.
- Minimize changes to the Asset Forfeiture program, particularly for those cities who have received clean program audits.