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June 22, 2018

Wisconsin Mayors, City Managers,
Village Presidents and Administrators

Good afternoon:

This letter is being sent on behalf of the Board of Directors of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, asking for your city or village's support for a campaign to keep the Dark Store and Walgreens tax shift in front of candidates for the Governorship and Legislature this year.

As you know, the Dark Store and Walgreens loopholes in Wisconsin tax law are slowly but surely shifting the share of property taxes paid by commercial properties onto home owners, renters, independent businesses and manufacturers. We estimate that communities affected by these shifts will see property tax bills for homeowners and others increase by an average of 8%; significantly more in some communities.

The League worked with a huge bipartisan majority within the Legislature to craft a fair solution to this tax scheme. Unfortunately, we were not able to convince legislative leaders to put the bills up for a vote. After reviewing the impact of this tax shift on the residents and independent businesses of Wisconsin, the League Board has directed us to implement an issue advocacy campaign to insure that this problem is discussed and addressed by the Legislature. You are a key part of that effort.

Your city or village has already started to receive regular updates on this challenge, and will also receive a toolkit of resources that you can use at the local level. Those tools will include an explanatory video that can be shown at municipal meetings and meetings of civic organizations. The League, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Counties Association, has drafted language that you can use to put this to an advisory vote in August or November. We will also provide you with background information that will be helpful when legislative and gubernatorial candidates ask about issues impacting your community.

We can't do this without your help. The Board has authorized a withdrawal of \$75,000 from League reserves for this effort. We are partnering with the Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, League of Wisconsin Municipal Mutual Insurance and others. But we also need your support. We realize that resources are limited, but please consider contributing what seems reasonable, based on the impact that this tax shift will have on your community, and what it will cost to fight the steady stream of big box and Walgreens tax appeals that have begun throughout the state.

(continued)

YOUR VOICE. YOUR WISCONSIN.

Every city and village is different and we do not presume to know what is a reasonable amount for you to contribute. We are hoping that every community will consider \$1,200 to be a minimum contribution to this important effort. Please make out checks to League of Wisconsin Municipalities-Dark Store Elimination. Checks can be mailed to the League at 131 West Wilson Street, Suite 505, Madison, WI 53703.

Thank you for stepping up to protect Wisconsin taxpayers.

Sincerely,



Jerry Deschane
Executive Director

P.S., if you want someone from the League to come to your community to discuss this further, don't hesitate to call me at 608-347-1792 or email jdeschane@lwm-info.org.