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September 23, 2013

Mr. Joseph Parisi
Dane County Executive
210 Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd.
Madison, WI 53703

Re: 2014 Dane County Budget

Dear Executive Parisi:

The Board of Directors of the Dane County Towns Association adopted a motion in support of several priorities for the 2014 Dane County Budget, soon to be released.

1. Maintain the level of Sheriff's Department rural patrols. The need for public safety remains significant. We appreciate the efforts of our Sheriff, with support of the County, to implement community policing as a response to the changing nature of crime. The professionalism of the Sheriff's Department deserves continuing support from the taxpayers.
2. We support maintaining strong support for the necessary infrastructure to support agricultural and economic development throughout the county. That includes supporting the County Highway system, which is the backbone of product to market transportation in Dane County. We are aware that revenues for transportation improvements are a challenge, a challenge that address faces towns as well. We are willing to continue to work with the County to try to obtain additional revenues from federal and state sources. We hope that the County will not compound difficulties by reducing funding for reconstruction and repair of the County trunk system.
3. We understand that the County faces significant challenges from levy limits and the cost of programs it provides. We note that there have been several instances in the recent past

where the County has come into conflict with towns, cities and villages over shifting responsibility for paying for certain services from the County alone to cities, villages and towns. This is not a responsible way to deal with funding shortfalls. It undermines support for services that belong at the County level.

From our perspective, we believe that the County should re-examine priorities. If the County's financial condition is so strained that it must push funding of automobile liability insurance from the County to the local units of government, there are other expenditures that first be discontinued. Notably, we question why the County continues to purchase land and open space, which is not a mandated program, if its finances are so tight.

Please know that although our Association may from time to time have disagreements with the County on issues, we appreciate the professionalism of your office and county departments in working with us. We have found during the past few years that County staff has become progressively more attentive to working cooperatively with the towns, solving problems through discussion and candidly accepting that there are issues upon which we are not going to agree. We look forward to making progress as a County by creatively engaging one another over these differences.

Best wishes to you and to the County as your budget process begins.

Sincerely,

Jerry Derr

Gerald H Derr, President
Dane County Towns Association