

July 15, 2003

The Honorable James Doyle
Governor
115 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Governor Doyle:

As you are well aware, the State of Wisconsin is facing significant budget challenges, similar to more than 40 other states. Last fall, we promised the state's electorate we were prepared to lead through these challenging times.

On June 24th, the legislature made good on that promise. Taking your budget proposal and improving on it, the legislature has approved a budget that spends less, borrows less, and taxes less than the one you presented to us in February and freezes property taxes and state spending for three years.

The budget has been finished for three weeks now. While you have flown to nearly every corner of the state to hold one made-for-TV publicity event after another on the budget, you have refused to request the bill so you can actually act upon it. Real people all over the state need to know how the final budget product will affect them. Schools need to know. Local governments need to know. The University System needs to know. And most of all, the taxpayers need to know. (For example, if you veto the property tax freeze, thousands of Wisconsin families will need to immediately set more money aside to pay higher property tax bills.)

While the legislature was conducting public hearings on your budget, you impatiently criticized us and urged us to act faster to get our budget work done on time. Without limiting public input and despite receiving the budget nearly a month late from you, we finished our work a week ahead of schedule. I cannot understand why you would now choose to unilaterally delay the budget and saddle individuals and local governments around this state with protracted uncertainty.

Even if you requested the budget today, you would have an additional six days to act. This will mean that you will have had a month to go over the entire document with your dozens of advisors. The time for delay is over. The time to act is now.

Sincerely,

John Gard
Assembly Speaker