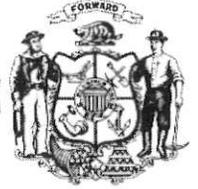




Frank Lasee

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR
FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



Senator Lasee's Testimony Senate Bill 403 - Nonconforming Manufactured Homes

In this simple bill we clarify that a mobile home community can continue as a nonconforming use, even if one of the homes in the community is altered or improved in excess of 50% of its assessed value. Because of the nature of manufactured homes, when a home is damaged, it is sometimes more economical to replace the structure than to repair it. Because the law is unclear, some zoning administrators believe that the replacement is not permitted because the replacement home is over 50% of that homes value, but it's not more than 50% of the community's value.

This bill also clarifies that the owner of a nonconforming manufactured home that is not located in a mobile home community can replace or repair their structure if it is damaged by wind, vandalism, fire, flood, ice, snow, mold, or infestation.

Many Wisconsinites do not have the financial means to fight against a local government bearing down on them with a regulatory pressures or telling them they can't fix their home. We want to help those folks have peace of mind so they know they will be able to repair or replace their home if it is damaged. We believe that people should be able to keep living on their land or in their mobile home community even if they need to repair or replace their manufactured home with another one.



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January 4, 2016

RE: Support for SB403 – Relating to: nonconforming uses and manufactured home communities.

Dear Senate Committee on Insurance, Housing and Trade:

This bill does two very important things.

1. 2013 Act 347 made it possible to repair or replace manufactured homes and infrastructure in a manufactured home community, even though the community may currently be a non-conforming use. This bill was passed with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, the law was only changed for towns, cities and villages. Counties was inadvertently left out of the bill. SB403 corrects that omission.
2. In addition to fixing Act 347, this bill makes it possible for a homeowner on private property to replace a manufactured home. This is critical to many families who may have a home destroyed through no fault of their own.

We urge you to take positive action on SB403. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Amy Bliss
Executive Director



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January 4, 2016

Submitted by John Gillespie, a volunteer working with numerous other Appleton area volunteers for over a year trying to replace a home for Jerry Monson, a 69 year old U.S. Veteran of the Vietnam War.

The following is to be used as desired at the January Senate hearing relative to the Jerry Monson dilemma and the City of Appleton prohibiting the replacement of Jerry's mobile home that was destroyed through admitted neglect by the Outagamie County Weatherization Program.

Jerry has lived over 30 years on his own lot on the far North side of Appleton, in the woods. He lived in an older but well maintained mobile home. It developed some roof leaks and he was assured he qualified for free support from the Outagamie County Weatherization Program. They proceeded to provide several thousand dollars of free energy efficiency work Jerry did not ask for. But they did not address the roof leak until a few months after they completed inside work.

Three men from the Weatherization Program went to the roof and caved it in above the living room. They refused to fix the roof and over the next few weeks rain saturated the entire home with mold starting to grow soon after. Jerry propped the living room ceiling up with timbers and floor jacks and taped plastic sheeting above his bed to catch the water during rains.

Repeated letters and in person visits to the Weatherization Agency produced no results or even replies. I contacted Chanel 11, in Green Bay and they interviewed Jerry at his unlivable home. The morning after the story aired executives from the Madison office quickly drove to Jerry's home. T.V.-11 had a film crew on hand as the state executives announced on camera they had defiantly dropped the ball and would direct the county insurance carrier to cover the cost of the destroyed home.

With the offer of the insurance settlement Jerry could replace his older mobile home with a new one of the same size. Jerry and all of us were delighted.

Our delight turned to dismay to learn that because Jerry had been annexed into the City of Appleton a few years earlier, he could not put in a mobile home even though his home was grandfathered as long as he wanted to live there . A city regulation prohibited mobile homes on provide property. The city would allow rebuilding the destroyed home if the rebuilding was not over 50% of the project.

If Jerry's home had been in a mobile home park within the city, he could have replaced the home. But because it was on his own private lot, he could not. To meet the city requirements for a home on a permanent foundation would cost in excess of \$75,000 more than the insurance paid. Volunteers provided \$2,000 for us to hire a law firm to see if there was a way to get the city to grant a variance. This did not produce any positive results.

We tried to see if Jerry could qualify for a Habitat Home. His income was too low. It must be at least \$25,000 a year. Jerry lives on social security of \$750 a month, and a veterans disability benefit of \$407 a month. He has no savings.

As our team of volunteers grew we were able to enlist the help of Ross Giordana, owner of Giordana Home Builders of Kaukauna. Ross has long been a supporter of Rawhide Boys Ranch, and learning Jerry was the very first Rawhide boy 50 years ago, he offered to contact a couple dozen of his subcontractors to see if they would be willing to help build Jerry a home. Amazingly every one of them said they would help with almost all of them offering to totally donate their services. The total donations of labor and materials was in excess of \$60,000. We were able to raise the funds to cover the materials that had to be purchased.

Jerry will move into his new home the end of January. But it is a shame a less costly plan could not have been approved by the City of Appleton. Please pass legislation on the state level that municipalities cannot do this to this to others that have home damage through no fault of their own.

Thank you.

John Gillespie, Founder of Rawhide Boys Ranch,
and a Volunteer with the Jerry Veteran Home Project.