



# JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

## **Senate Bill 571**

Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges

*January 19, 2016*

Good morning Madame Chair and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 571.

This bill provides narrow flexibility to allow UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) and UW-Madison to react in a timely manner to a rapidly changing agricultural real estate landscape by selling or exchanging properties in urban areas and re-investing in land that becomes available near other existing research stations in more rural locations.

Under current law, CALs and UW-Madison are required to bring any sale, lease, purchase, or exchange of agricultural land before the State Building Commission for approval. Because of this, agricultural lands that become available for sale may be sold before the university can make it through the approval process with the commission. This proposal provides limited authority to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to buy, sell, lease, and exchange agricultural land used by UW-Madison without the approval of the Building Commission.

The properties involved in the sale, purchase, lease, or exchange must serve the purpose of agricultural instruction and research. It is important to note that new construction projects on those lands would still be subject to current State Building Commission protocols and approvals.

Additionally, net proceeds from the sale, purchase, lease, or exchange of agricultural land would be placed in a non-lapsable fund. Those funds would be available for future purchase of agricultural land or for the erection of facilities for research and instruction in animal husbandry, agricultural engineering, and agricultural and life sciences at UW-Madison. However, the funds used for the erection of facilities would still need the approval of the State Building Commission.

This consolidation effort is a vital part of CALs' infrastructure reinvestment plan. Several eminent land opportunities provide a unique opportunity to address a long-term development problem and secure vital research assets for the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify this morning and I would be happy to answer any questions.

29TH SENATE DISTRICT

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