



Brown County Taxpayers Association

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Members of the Green Bay City Council:

The Brown County Taxpayers Association (BCTA) is a county-wide organization comprised of taxpaying volunteers who take seriously government's authority to tax its citizens and how, when taxed, that money is spent. In short, we are a watchdog organization that, among other things, wants public taxing policy to be held up to the sunlight and understood. Such is not the case with Brown County's recently approved sales tax.

Because of the County's recent sales tax coup, now you are being asked by the County to act upon the requirement for the City of Green Bay to divert room tax revenues for the financing of a new expo center. Four of you, who also serve on the Brown County Board, initially and prudently voted at your May 17<sup>th</sup> County Board meeting to delay action until the proposed package could be vetted out and the public's will be better known. You lost that vote - BUT you are to be commended for your responsible approach in dealing with such a monumental and impactful package. You dissented from the County Executive's "Ready, fire, aim!" approach. This evening you have a second "kick at the same cat" – how unique and fortuitous is that! We ask that you and your other eight colleagues slow this down for proper evaluation and discussion.

Numerous issues abound. Among them, and perhaps the most troubling and problematic, is the lack of analysis and definition behind the estimates for each of the other eight County projects identified to benefit from the \$147M total proposal for which only \$15M (10%) is going to the expo center. More homework went into developing the \$15M estimate for the expo center than went into the other \$132M for the other eight projects, which is either too much or too low - which do you think? What is intended for any excess sales tax revenues collected? Why not levy a sales tax exclusively for the expo center: shorter in duration and less in amount collected? Since when is the delivery of the County's core services, (e.g., library, jail, roads, health services, etc.) to be paid for by a

sales tax? If that's such a great idea, let's do away with property taxes completely and use sales tax revenues for the delivery of ALL County services. And the fact that non-County residents pay a portion of the sales tax is true, BUT grossly and recklessly overstated. Using numbers from the Department of Tourism, Brown County, and Brown County's consultant (AECOM Report - pgs. 82-83), the amount paid by non-residents is approximately 11% - NOT the oft-heard 25-30%!

In summary, the BCTA is not opposed to a replacement for the Brown County Veterans Memorial Arena. However, we ARE opposed to the intentional blitz and lack of scrutiny with which the entire package has been rolled out. We request that YOU do what a majority of the Brown County Board did NOT do: slow this careening train down, ask the obvious questions, demand answers, and, most of all, advocate for the best interests of your 9,000 tax-paying respective constituents. You were elected to do their bidding – not the County's.

Sincerely,

Rich Heidel  
BCTA – President

cc: Mayor Jim Schmitt