

WISCONSIN BUSINESS LEADERS

SUPPORT THE UW SYSTEM'S GROWTH AGENDA FOR WISCONSIN

October 3, 2007

To: Representative Mike Huebsch
Representative Kitty Rhoades
Representative Jeff Fitzgerald
Representative Jim Kreuser

Senator Judy Robson
Senator Russ Decker
Senator Robert Jauch
Senator Scott Fitzgerald

Members of the Budget Conference Committee:

As business leaders, we are concerned about the state's economic future. Our ability to compete and win in today's marketplace depends upon a steady supply of educated workers and reliable support from our public university.

We urge you to keep the state's knowledge pipeline intact, by fully funding the University of Wisconsin System's ongoing operations while making a prudent investment in the Growth Agenda for Wisconsin.

We are justifiably proud of our public university. Our 26 campuses and the statewide UW-Extension network have earned a strong reputation for academic excellence. The university contributes in many ways to our business success, and the UW System is recognized as one of the most efficiently managed institutions of higher education in the nation.

Even the most efficient businesses must plan for growth in operating expenses, such as utility bills, health benefits, facilities maintenance, and other fixed costs. The UW System budget endorsed by the bipartisan Joint Committee on Finance funds these and other "cost-to-continue" items, while providing about \$30 million for the Growth Agenda. That plan creates more seats in UW classrooms for Wisconsin residents and expands cutting-edge research in UW laboratories, both of which will stimulate Wisconsin's economic growth and long-term prosperity.

The Assembly budget falls \$120 million short in funding UW's academic programs, student services, scientific research, and business outreach. This would necessitate broad cuts at UW campuses and would paralyze the Growth Agenda. The net effect would be a smaller, less accessible, less affordable, less responsive public university which is less prepared to support Wisconsin businesses. That is not the right direction for our state.

Fiscal responsibility is important. Prudent investments in Wisconsin's future are part of that responsibility. Conscientious investment in higher education is a solid move toward our goal of creating a vibrant state economy where high-growth businesses and high-wage jobs are abundant.

Please support Wisconsin businesses by investing in our best source of college-educated workers and scientific discoveries. With a robust UW System, our businesses and our state's economy will only grow stronger. Thank you.

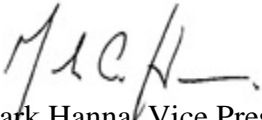
Respectfully,



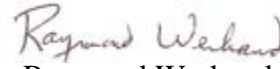
Gale Klappa, Chairman, President & CEO
Wisconsin Energy & WE Energies
Co-Chair of the Milwaukee 7 Regional
Economic Development Advisory Council
Milwaukee



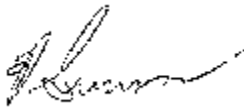
Tom Osowski, Plant Manager
Schuette Metals
Rothchild



Mark Hanna, Vice President
Maritime Financial Group
Sheboygan



Raymond Werhand, Director
The Spruce Group
West Bend



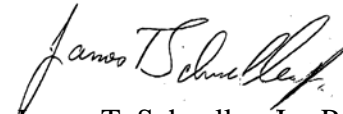
Keith Summers
UW Colleges Board of Visitors
Appleton



Darlo Wentz
Former Mayor
City of Richland Center




Brian H. Johnson
Career Education/
Current YPN Program Manager
Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce



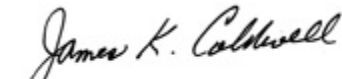
James T. Schneller, Jr., President
AVISTA Incorporated
Platteville



Hooshang Zeyghami, CEO/President
Central Wisconsin Engineers, Inc.
Weston



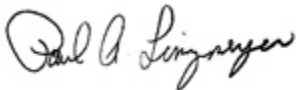
John Noel, President & CEO
AIG Travel Guard
Stevens Point



James Caldwell, President
First Citizens State Bank
Whitewater



Chuck Nason, President
Worzella Publishing
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Paul Linzmeyer, President
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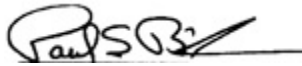
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Gold Key Realty, Inc.
Marshfield



Tim Higgins
Chiropractic Services
Appleton



Audrey McClellan, Vice President
UW Colleges Board of Visitors
Janesville



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Associated Banc-Corp
Green Bay



Toby Marcovich, Attorney at Law
Marcovich, Cochrane, Milliken,
Swanson, and Kropid, LLP
Superior



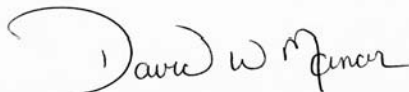
Don Shipp, President, CEO & Chairman
Allete Corporation
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Tom Palmer, President & CEO
First National Bank of River Falls/Prescott
River Falls



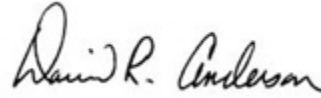
Dan Genereau
Financial Advisor
City Council Member
Rice Lake



David W. Manor
President/CEO
Superior-Douglas County Chamber of Commerce
Superior



Gary Wolter, President
Madison Gas & Electric
Madison



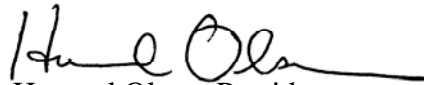
Dave Anderson, President
American Family Insurance
Madison



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La Crosse Chamber of Commerce
La Crosse



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Operations Manager
Nexen Group, Inc.