



January 28, 2010

Representative Dean Kaufert  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8952  
Madison, WI 53708-8952

Representative Al Ott  
State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Dear Representatives Kaufert & Ott:

Assuming no changes in federal regulations, once the 2010 Census figures are released the Fox Cities population will exceed 200,000. As a result, Valley Transit will lose approximately \$1.5 million in federal operating funds annually, about 20% of the budget. If the local municipalities that pay for Valley Transit service through property taxes were to absorb the loss, it could mean up to a 70% increase of their local share just to maintain existing transit services.

We need your support and your sponsorship of the Fox Cities Regional Transit Authority (RTA) bill drafted by Representative Penny Bernard-Schaber. Currently, the State of Wisconsin legislation does not allow for a Fox Cities RTA. We are asking that legislation be passed to allow a Fox Cities RTA be formed through a referendum to preserve the system we have. The bill drafted by Representative Bernard-Schaber allows maximum local control of the RTA while protecting the tax-payers by mandating a referendum specifying how much sales tax will be collected, if any, in the communities that choose to be members of the RTA.

The number of people who rely on public transportation to get them to jobs, school, medical facilities and other essential functions is growing. We must find a way to plan for the future and develop a system that meets the needs of those who depend on us most and those who have a choice. By doing so, the Fox Cities will experience economic and environmental benefits, creating a community that is stronger for riders and non-riders alike. Without the flexibility afforded by a locally controlled RTA, public transportation in the Fox Cities is likely to cease to exist by 2013.

I would appreciate your support on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Donald Merkes  
Mayor