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# TONY KURTZ

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 50<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony before the Assembly Committee on State Affairs  
Assembly Bill 219

Good morning, Chairman Swearingen and committee members. Thank you for holding this hearing today on Assembly Bill 219.

The Wisconsin Interoperability System for Communications (WISCOM) is a radio system that permits emergency responders from public safety agencies to communicate across jurisdictions. State and local agencies may choose to use WISCOM as their primary radio system. These agencies are called daily users.

The current system was developed in 2012 and has reached its end-of-life. The Department of Military Affairs is in the process of building the system's replacement. The WISCOM replacement must ensure the system can deliver public-safety grade communications to current users, expand to support other users at the state and local levels, and provide interoperability with other communications systems.

While much of the cost of replacing the WISCOM system's technology and infrastructure updates is a responsibility of the state, many local agencies will likely need to update their radios and associated technology as well. Assembly Bill 219 creates a grant program to assist local agencies with those costs.

For the first four years of the grant, 70% of available funds would be designated to WISCOM daily users. Daily users are agencies that use WISCOM as their primary radio network. In the first four years, if an agency wanted to become a daily user the local unit of government would submit a written resolution or commitment stating its intention to join the statewide public safety interoperable communication system as well as committing a 20% grant match. The remaining 30% of available funds would be available to any interoperable users, and after the first four years, all funds will be available for any user with the matching commitment through the application process.

Assembly Amendment 1 clarifies the funding designation in the first four years, as well as specify that radio equipment purchased with this grant must be P-25 compliant but makes no further requirements for the type or brand of radio.

Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 219. I'm happy to answer any questions at this time.



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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## November 1, 2023 Assembly Committee on State Affairs Testimony on Assembly Bill 219

Good Afternoon!

Thank you Chairman Swearingen and committee members for hearing Assembly Bill (AB) 219, which would create a local grant program for public safety interoperable communication system upgrades. Thank you Chairman Swearingen, Rep. Green, Rep. Moses, and Rep. Spiros for cosponsoring this bipartisan legislation.

The cost of replacing the Wisconsin Interoperability System for Communications (WISCOM) is the responsibility of the state. However, many local agencies will need to update their radios and associated technology. AB 219 creates a grant program to assist local agencies with those costs.

WISCOM is a radio system that permits emergency responders from public safety agencies to communicate across jurisdictions. State and local agencies may choose to use WISCOM as their primary radio system. These agencies are called daily users. The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) estimates there are about 5,300 radios from daily users that need to be replaced.

The current system was developed in 2012 and has reached its end-of-life. The 2023-2025 State Budget allocated \$45 million to the Department of Military Affairs to contract with L3Harris Technologies, Inc to update WISCOM. The WISCOM replacement must ensure the system can deliver public-safety grade communications to current users, expand to support other users at the state and local levels, and provide interoperability with other communications systems.

The grant program requires a 20% local match. Additionally, AB 219 specifies that for the first four years of the program, 70% of available funds would be designated to WISCOM daily users and 30% would be designated for non-daily users.

The 2023-2025 State Budget provided \$2 million/year beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 25 in the JFC Supplemental to fund this grant program.

This bipartisan bill, as amended, passed the Senate on a voice vote on September 14, 2023.

Thank you again to the committee for hearing AB 219, and your timely action on the bill.



To: Assembly Committee on State Affairs  
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association (BSSA)  
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association (WS&DSA)  
Date: November 1, 2023  
**RE: Support for Assembly Bill 219**

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Good afternoon, Chairman Swearingen and members of the committee. I am Sheriff Matt Joski from Kewaunee County. I am here today speaking in support of Assembly Bill 219 on behalf of the Badger State Sheriffs' Association (BSSA) and the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association (WS&DSA). BSSA is a statewide organization representing Wisconsin's 72 elected county sheriffs. WS&DSA is a statewide organization representing over 1,000 members, including sheriffs, deputies, and jail officers.

This bill will create a grant program for public safety agencies to upgrade their public safety interoperable communication systems. The Wisconsin Interoperable System for Communications (WISCOM) is a shared statewide, interoperable, land mobile radio public safety communication system. This system connects local, state, and federal first responders and is a mission critical communications platform utilized throughout the state for mutual aid coordination. The 2023-25 state budget included \$2 million dollars to support this grant program.

The current system, which has been in operational use throughout the state for 15 years, is reaching its "end of life" and is in the process of being updated as its technical specifications are no longer able to meet program demand. This upgrade will create a more reliable and adaptable system moving forward. The new system is specified as 95% mobile coverage with the ability to provide 95% portable coverage to those areas where additional towers (sub-systems) are incorporated (i.e., daily use counties and communities).

A key feature of the project includes changing the system to 800 MHz bandwidth. This will provide a cleaner, better-organized bandwidth, allowing WISCOM to perform better in building coverage and leaving room to grow the system in the future. Additionally, the 800 MHz bandwidth will allow for broadband connectivity for smart devices. Currently, WISCOM is a very high frequency (VHF) radio system, which has become problematic because of limited availability and frequency coordination issues in VHF bandwidths. Further, the FCC has "narrowbanded" VHF frequencies to reduce congestion, which has reduced the effectiveness of WISCOM's VHF radios.

The grant program under AB 219 will help both current daily users of the system and new users to upgrade their current systems to effectively build out WISCOM to what it was always intended to be and set the state on the right track for the future. In addition, the bill, as amended by the Senate, requires all types of local governments to indicate if they intend to join the new system and ensures that radios purchased under this grant program are 700/800 MHz Phase II-compliant.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of this legislation and I am happy to answer any questions.



## Testimony on 2023 Assembly Bill 219

Major General Paul Knapp, The Adjutant General

Assembly Committee on State Affairs

November 1, 2023


The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) is providing the following background information as related to Assembly Bill 219, specifically the grant program's potential and positive impact on the transition to the future statewide public safety interoperable communication system.

Under current law, DMA is responsible for administering and overseeing the operation of the current and future statewide public safety interoperable communication systems. The existing system, called WISCOM, is currently operating on the VHF frequency band, which holds limitations. The future communication system will transition to the 700/800 MHz frequency band which will eliminate the current VHF frequency band limitations.

Many local public safety agencies struggle to find funds to purchase new radios because of high costs, limited funding, and competing budgetary needs. It is common for local agencies to use their radios beyond the recommended lifecycle because of these financial constraints.

Although the new system does provide interoperable communication resources for VHF users who are unable to migrate to 700/800 MHz, for local public safety agencies to utilize the future system for daily use and dispatch, they would need radios that are capable of operating in the 700/800 MHz frequency. In most cases, local public safety agencies who are daily users of WISCOM would need to replace their existing radio fleet.

This bill creates a grant program that is imperative to helping local public safety agencies fund the upgrade of their mission essential radios. Additionally, language within the bill allows for the ability to coordinate grant funding with the timing of the system upgrade in each local area, which will ensure that local agencies are ready to transition to the new system, when the upgrade is implemented in their region.

Budgetary Price for Juneau County						
List prices for budgetary purposes Firm quotes require Falcon Configuration						
Model No.	Description	Qty	Unit Price	Ext Price	NASPO	Ext NASPO
XL-PPM1M-NA	PORTABLE,XL-200P,PKP,BLK,US,NA	320	\$2,945.00	\$942,400.00	\$2,179.30	\$697,376.00
XL-PKGF3	FEATURE PACKAGE,DUAL BAND VHF 7/800	320	\$1,100.00	\$352,000.00	\$814.00	\$260,480.00
XL-NC5Z	ANTENNA,FLEX,HELICAL,136-870 MHZ	320	\$110.00	\$35,200.00	\$81.40	\$26,048.00
XL-PKGPT	FEATURE PACKAGE,P25 TRUNKING	320	\$1,600.00	\$512,000.00	\$1,184.00	\$378,880.00
XL-PL4F	FEATURE,P25 PHASE 2 TDMA	320	\$250.00	\$80,000.00	\$185.00	\$59,200.00
XL-PA4K	BATTERY,LI-ION,HI-CAPACITY,4800MAH	320	\$175.00	\$56,000.00	\$129.50	\$41,440.00
XL-CH6F	CHARGER, SINGLE BAY	320	\$245.00	\$78,400.00	\$181.30	\$58,016.00
XL-AE4B	SPEAKER MICROPHONE,EMER BUTTON	320	\$225.00	\$72,000.00	\$166.50	\$53,280.00
XL-HC3L	BELT CLIP,METAL	320	\$30.00	\$9,600.00	\$22.20	\$7,104.00
LABOR	PROGRAMMING	640	\$50.00	\$32,000.00	\$37.00	\$23,680.00
List Total:				\$2,169,600.00	NASPO:	\$1,605,504.00

20% Cost Share \$321,100.80

Optional Encryption

XL-PKG8F	FEATURE,256-AES,64-DES ENCRYPTION	1	\$750.00	\$750.00	\$555.00	\$555.00
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20% Cost Share \$111.00

Total w/Encryption: \$1,606,059.00

20% Cost Share \$321,211.80

Model No.	Description	Qty	Unit Price	Ext Price	NASPO	Ext NASPO
XZ-MPM1M-NA	MOBILE, XL-200M, MULTIBAND, LTE, NA	165	\$3,815.00	\$629,475.00	\$2,823.10	\$465,811.50
XZ-PL4J	FEATURE, VHF BAND	165	\$550.00	\$90,750.00	\$407.00	\$67,155.00
XZ-PL4L	FEATURE, 700/800 MHZ BAND	165	\$550.00	\$90,750.00	\$407.00	\$67,155.00
XZ-AN6U	ANTENNA, BASE, STD ROOF MOUNT LOW LOSS	165	\$80.00	\$13,200.00	\$59.20	\$9,768.00
XZ-AN8A	ANTENNA, ELEMENT, FLEXIBLE, V/U/700/800	165	\$210.00	\$34,650.00	\$155.40	\$25,641.00
XZ-PKGPT	FEATURE PACKAGE, P25 TRUNKING	165	\$1,600.00	\$264,000.00	\$1,184.00	\$195,360.00
XZ-PL4F	FEATURE, PHASE 2 TDMA	165	\$250.00	\$41,250.00	\$185.00	\$30,525.00
XZ-CP6A	CONTROL UNIT, XL-CH	165	\$1,650.00	\$272,250.00	\$1,221.00	\$201,465.00
XZ-MC6A	MICROPHONE, XL, STANDARD MOBILE	165	\$105.00	\$17,325.00	\$77.70	\$12,820.50
XZ-MA4A	KIT, MOUNTING XL-MOBILE UNIVERSAL	165	\$495.00	\$81,675.00	\$366.30	\$60,439.50
XZ-LS6A	SPEAKER, EXTERNAL, MOBILE	165	\$60.00	\$9,900.00	\$44.40	\$7,326.00
XZ-CA6Z	CABLE, XL-MOBILE, SPEAKER ACCY, 20 FEET	165	\$250.00	\$41,250.00	\$185.00	\$30,525.00
LABOR	PROGRAMMING	330	\$50.00	\$16,500.00	\$37.00	\$12,210.00
List Total:				\$1,602,975.00	NASPO:	\$1,186,201.50

20% Cost Share \$237,240.30

Optional Encryption

XZ-PKG8F	FEATURE, 256-AES, 64-DES ENCRYPTION	1	\$750.00	\$750.00	\$555.00	\$555.00
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20% Cost Share \$111.00

Total w/Encryption: \$1,186,756.50

20% Cost Share \$237,351.30

BM-PKGCL-XL	PKG, 1 BEON XL RADIO LICENSE	320	\$365.00	\$116,800.00	\$270.10	\$86,432.00
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20% Cost Share \$17,286.40

Total w/Enc & BeOn NASPO \$2,879,247.50

20% Cost Share \$575,849.50

485 Radios