



*Representing UW-Madison Faculty.
Strengthening Wisconsin.*

Testimony to the Assembly Committee on Agriculture in Support of Assembly Bill 77, Providing Funding for Extension Services

April 7, 2021

PROFS, the Public Representation Organization of the (UW-Madison) Faculty Senate, represents the interests of the UW-Madison faculty. PROFS is pleased to lend its support to Assembly Bill 77, which will provide desperately-needed funding for extension services at the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) in the field of applied agricultural research.

UW's Cooperative Extension was recently brought back under the umbrella of UW-Madison. While the faculty are very happy with this development, the connection between UW-Madison and Extension was always strong. Even when Extension was officially a separate entity, many CALs faculty received funding for their services from Extension. These faculty and others from both Extension and CALs were working collaboratively and seamlessly to address the challenges confronting the state.

The collaboration on agricultural issues is the essence of the Wisconsin Idea. It has yielded many positive outcomes for our state's agricultural community and all of us who depend on its success. The \$1 million per year in new funding in AB 77 will be an important step in ensuring that this vital work continues into the future.

PROFS also commends Governor Evers for including a similar financial commitment in his 2021-23 state budget proposal for agriculture-focused extension positions. The Governor goes a step further and requires the creation of 20 new positions. And he would require UW-Madison to submit a report to the Governor and the Joint Finance Committee by January 1, 2023 specifying the dates of hires for each person hired for these positions and their responsibilities. The report would be required to highlight how each agent has communicated climate change issues to farmers and the metrics used for tracking agricultural practice changes relating to climate change.

The UW-Madison faculty look forward to continuing to work with legislators to ensure that the Wisconsin Idea remains vibrant for generations to come.