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5 **A RESOLUTION**
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7 Endorsing the State of Wisconsin passing legislation which would fairly divide Register
8 of Deeds fees between the State and the collecting county, and authorizing the Office of
9 Government Affairs staff to request inclusion of this resolution as part of the 2022
10 Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) legislative platform
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13 WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has inflicted a structural deficit on local
14 governments in Wisconsin, whereby the costs to continue the services citizens expect
15 and deserve rise higher based on inflation than do the percentage of State shared
16 revenue increases which are typically less than one percent per year (File Nos. 18-944,
17 19-161, & 22-457); and
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19 WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin’s allocation of shared revenue to local
20 government has declined or remained stagnant, local governments in Wisconsin are the
21 most reliant on the property tax, and in a February 2019 paper, “Dollars and Sense: Is it
22 time for a new municipal financing framework in Wisconsin?”, the Wisconsin Policy
23 Forum (WPF) wrote:
24

25 “Wisconsin voters and their leaders will need time to decide whether and how to
26 approve an alternative revenue framework for cities and villages. Still, the urgency
27 of doing so is real. Signs of stress are appearing...”
28

29 ; and
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31 WHEREAS, while costs have been rising, the State of Wisconsin has been
32 profiting from the economic activity generated in its localities, as a Wisconsin Legislative
33 Fiscal Bureau revenue estimates report dated January 25, 2022 notes, more than \$2.5
34 billion in additional tax collections above the projection for the current biennium ending
35 on June 30, 2023; and
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37 WHEREAS, the March 2022 WPF issue of its “Focus” newsletter titled, “In Hot
38 Housing Market, Real Estate Transfer Revenues Near All-Time High,” the WPF noted
39 that while revenue growth from real estate transfer fees had increased 37 percent, the
40 lion’s share continues going to State coffers as the State receives 80 percent of such
41 fees and counties only 20 percent; and

42 WHEREAS, in File No. 19-161, Milwaukee County affirmed the recommended of
43 the Fair Deal for Milwaukee Workgroup, including the support of the Milwaukee
44 Metropolitan Association of Commerce (MMAC), which called for, among other things,
45 “An equal split of Circuit Court and Register of Deed fees collected by the County and,
46 currently, disproportionately remitted to the State.”; and
47

48 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Counties Association legislative agenda currently
49 includes many of the policy initiatives endorsed by the Fair Deal for Milwaukee County
50 Workgroup, including an equitable split of court fees and an ability to increase the local
51 sales tax, but does not include an equitable split of real estate transfer fees; and
52

53 WHEREAS, counties disproportionately bear the burden doing most of the work,
54 directly serving the public, and maintaining the buildings which facilitate the public
55 service while only receiving 20 percent of the proceeds; and
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57 WHEREAS, the way by which the State of Wisconsin allows local governments
58 to fund themselves is fundamentally broken and the State is setting up its local
59 governments to fail without a change in statutes, and at the very least should more fairly
60 divide revenues collected by registers of deeds across the State; and
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62 WHEREAS, the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, at its meeting of
63 July 11, 2022, recommended adoption of File No. 22-672 (vote 3-0); now, therefore,
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65 BE IT RESOLVED, Milwaukee County hereby supports the State of Wisconsin to
66 evenly divide the revenue collected from Register of Deed fees between the State and
67 collecting county;
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69 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Government Affairs staff is hereby
70 authorized and requested to communicate the contents of this resolution to the
71 Wisconsin Counties Association for consideration in its 2022 Legislative Platform.
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