



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Chris Abele

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DATE: June 24, 2015

TO: The Honorable Milwaukee Board of Supervisors

FROM: Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive

RE: County Board File No. 15-351 on authorizing Milwaukee County to develop a comprehensive, multi-targeted plan to address the issue of food deserts and food insecurity within Milwaukee County neighborhoods and authorizing an appropriation transfer to reallocate up to \$200,000.

I am vetoing County Board File No. 15-351 pursuant to the authority granted to me by Article IV, Section 23(a) of the Wisconsin Constitution and Section 59.17(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

The County Board and I share a common goal of reducing health disparities in Milwaukee County and I would like to thank the authors of this resolution for their ideas, good intentions, and desire to make Milwaukee County a better place to live.

For four years I have been restoring programs that address poverty and related issues in Milwaukee County. I've kept bus fares flat and increased transit service, I've added millions of dollars to mental health care services, and I've strengthened safety-net programs across the County. Many Supervisors supported those efforts and I am proud that we did those things together without raising taxes while insulating and strengthening our core services from budget pressures.

No one disagrees that the Hunger Task Force and Growing Power are great organizations that do important work. At the same time, earmarked funds come at a cost to the County's ability to deliver the services we are legally mandated to provide and undercut our progress towards sustainability. I have consistently vetoed efforts to allocate funds for special purposes, and am doing so again here.

Given the long-term fiscal imbalance that the County still faces, the introduction of new programs is something that has to be analyzed and carefully considered before tax dollars are committed. This is doubly so when contingency funds, which are meant to be saved for emergencies, are used. Milwaukee County may have a role to play in directly addressing food deserts and food insecurity that is both meaningful and fiscally sustainable. However, the resolution as written relies on one-time funds and will require subsequent budgetary action to fund operations in 2016.

I ask Supervisors to sustain this veto and allow my Administration to investigate this concept further before committing taxpayer dollars. Together, let's commit to furthering the cause of food security in a way that is responsible and sustainable.