

# 2025 WLIP Report

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# OVERVIEW

The Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP), administered by the Division of Intergovernmental Relations within the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), provides public funding to Wisconsin counties for the modernization of local land records. This funding takes the form of register of deeds real estate document recording fees retained at the county level and grants awarded by DOA.

This annual report discusses the year in review for WLIP program activities and how WLIP funding was invested in county geospatial technology and infrastructure in the previous reporting year (2024).

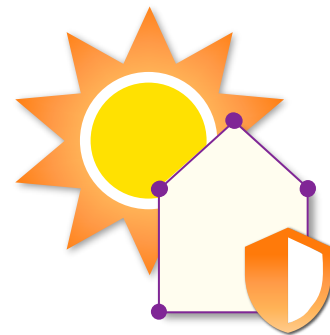
## WLIP YEAR IN REVIEW

### STATEWIDE PARCEL DATA & THE JUDICIAL PRIVACY LAW

In 2025 a significant amount of time was devoted to planning for Wisconsin Act 235 of 2023, now codified as Wis. Stat. §757.07, which went into effect on April 1, 2025. The law allows judicial officers to request that certain personal information be protected from public disclosure and removed from public display, including names on public-facing land records websites. DOA participated in policy implementation discussions with groups, including the Wisconsin Land Information Association Judicial Officers Privacy Task Force and the Greater Wisconsin's Property Records Industry Association Local chapter. The Act 235 judicial privacy workflow begins with a statutorily-required form and follows the process described on the Shield Request webpage created by the State Cartographer's Office (SCO). Recognizing that owner names are of enormous utility to many users of the statewide parcel database, **DOA seeks to retain owner names**

**in the statewide parcel map database as much as possible, while still complying with the law.**

For documentation of business use cases for parcel owner names, see [Parcel\\_User\\_Feedback](#), a compilation of comments provided by users of the statewide parcel layer over time, from Version 1-Version 10.



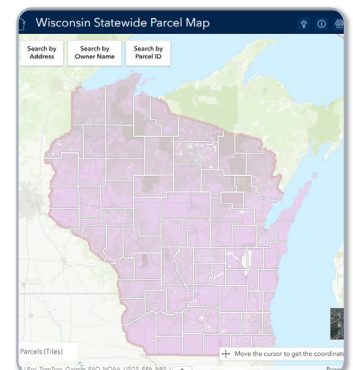
### 2026 GRANT APPLICATION RELEASE

The 2026 WLIP Grant Application was made available in September, offering three types of WLIP grants totaling \$4.4 million. Each county is eligible to receive a \$20k Strategic Initiative grant for 2026. Strategic Initiative grants are prioritized to meet standards known as “benchmarks” for parcel dataset development, which includes the annual parcel/tax roll data submission. Every county is also eligible for a \$1k Training & Education grant, and the 55 counties that retained less than \$100k in recording fees during the previous fiscal year are eligible for Base Budget grants.

### V11 STATEWIDE PARCEL MAP DATABASE PROJECT

The Version 11 Statewide Parcel Map Database Project (V11) is part of the larger Statewide Digital Parcel Map Initiative, a multi-year DOA initiative that resulted from Act 20 of 2013. The Parcel Initiative is important for improving the quality of Wisconsin’s real estate information, economic development, emergency planning and response, and other citizen services. Like V1-V10, the V11 Project was a collaboration between DOA and the State Cartographer’s Office.

Counties submit data according to the Searchable Format, a set of standards detailed in the [Submission Documentation](#) that followed from the statutory directives in Act 20. On June 23rd, **the V11 statewide parcel database was released**—the 11th version of the state’s publicly available digital parcel map, featuring 3.56 million parcel records. Visit the statewide parcel map [webpage](#) for data downloads, a web app, and more. Detailed analysis of V11 data can be found in the V11 Final Report.



## Statewide PLSS Layer Sub-Project

In 2025, DOA and SCO continued work to create an updated statewide PLSS database, constructed from local PLSS corner data collected as part of the V11 Project. Learn more about PLSS data in Wisconsin at [www.sco.wisc.edu/surveying](http://www.sco.wisc.edu/surveying).

## COUNTY DATA ACCESS & OPEN DATA



**GeoData@Wisconsin**

For Version 11 of the Statewide Parcel Map Database Project, the data request was coordinated with the UW-Madison Robinson Map Library (RML). RML collects and archives annual snapshots of several framework vector layers which

are available for download via GeoData@Wisconsin, a geospatial data portal developed in partnership with SCO. In 2025, **379 new county GIS datasets with 457 feature classes were added to GeoData@Wisconsin** for public download. For the most current county data, users can always consult county webpages, listed at [doa.wi.gov/DIR/County\\_Contacts.pdf](http://doa.wi.gov/DIR/County_Contacts.pdf).

## FEDERAL FUNDING FOR LIDAR

With the completion of the FY22 lidar acquisition project, all 72 Wisconsin counties have lidar elevation data meeting federal Quality Level 2 standard or better. County land information offices have been critical to the success of the statewide acquisition. In 2025, WLIP staff helped coordinate another successful multi-county grant application for QL1 lidar data through the federal USGS 3D Elevation Program (3DEP).

- A multi-county application for FY25 3DEP lidar submitted through DOA was funded—Langlade, Menominee, Outagamie, Shawano, and Waupaca counties—for a total of **\$902,240.00** in federal funding.
- Total cost of acquisition and processing was \$1,082,800.00, with county and state partners contributing the balance.
- A separate successful application was submitted by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on behalf of the seven counties that are a part of the region.
- DOA also directly supports distribution of final data products, as well as WLIP-funded lidar data, to state partners and to the public through <https://geodata.wisc.edu> and the interactive map for "Wisconsin Elevation/LiDAR Data" at [www.sco.wisc.edu/data/elevationlidar](http://www.sco.wisc.edu/data/elevationlidar).
- The Department of Natural Resources offers online streaming REST services and WI DNR Open Data.
- The status of the statewide elevation effort can be viewed at [coast.noaa.gov/inventory](http://coast.noaa.gov/inventory), with some 3DEP data available on the USGS site, <https://apps.nationalmap.gov/downloader>.

This totals **\$8,145,192.42 of federal funding netted for lidar** in 2015-2025 3DEP applications coordinated by DOA on behalf of county and other Wisconsin partners.

A new USGS program called the 3D Hydrography program (3DHP) may offer additional opportunities for funding in the coming year.

## WISCONSIN LAND INFORMATION COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Wisconsin Land Information Council (WLIC) serves in an advisory role to DOA on matters relating to the WLIP. The group provides a channel for stakeholder organizations to voice their opinions on matters relating to land information records modernization. The WLIC met three times in 2025.

# FUNDING

Since the Program’s earliest days, from 1990 through June 30, 2025, Wisconsin counties have retained a total of \$244 million for land information activities and received a total of \$95 million in land information grants. In order to retain fees for land information and be eligible for WLIP grants, county land information offices must meet several **requirements for accountability and transparency**:

- Update the county’s land information plan at least every three years
- Meet with the county land information council to review expenditures, policies, and priorities of the land information office at least once per year
- Report on expenditure activities each year
- Submit detailed applications for WLIP grants
- Complete the annual WLIP survey, if conducted
- Subscribe to DOA’s land information listserv
- Submit parcel data in the Searchable Format to DOA
- Submit other WLIP-funded GIS layers to DOA as requested

## WLIP REVENUE AND GRANTS

As of January 1, 2015, counties are required to submit \$7 per document recorded to the state Land Information Fund. The \$7 contribution to the state Land Information Fund amounted to state revenue of \$5.6 million in State FY2025, which is the source of funding for WLIP grants and administration of the program.

### ROD Document Recording Fee

\$15	County Undesignated
\$ 8	County Retained for Land Information
<u>\$ 7</u>	State Land Information Fund
\$30	

Because counties with modest real estate market activity do not generate substantial land information office revenue, WLIP Base Budget grants are provided in order to enable eligible counties to develop, maintain, and operate a basic land information system. Counties that retain less than \$100k in retained fees for land information are eligible for a Base Budget grant according to the formula at right.

### WLIP Base Budget Grant Eligibility Formula

**\$100k – ROD document recording fees @ \$8 per doc recorded**

Example: County records 5,000 documents  
 $\$100k - (5,000 \times \$8)$   
 $\$100k - (\$40k)$   
 $\$ 60k = \text{Base Budget grant eligibility}$

Base Budget grants totaled \$3.1 million statewide and were awarded to 58 counties in 2025. Counties are projected to retain fees and receive grants that combined total \$11 million for Calendar 2025.

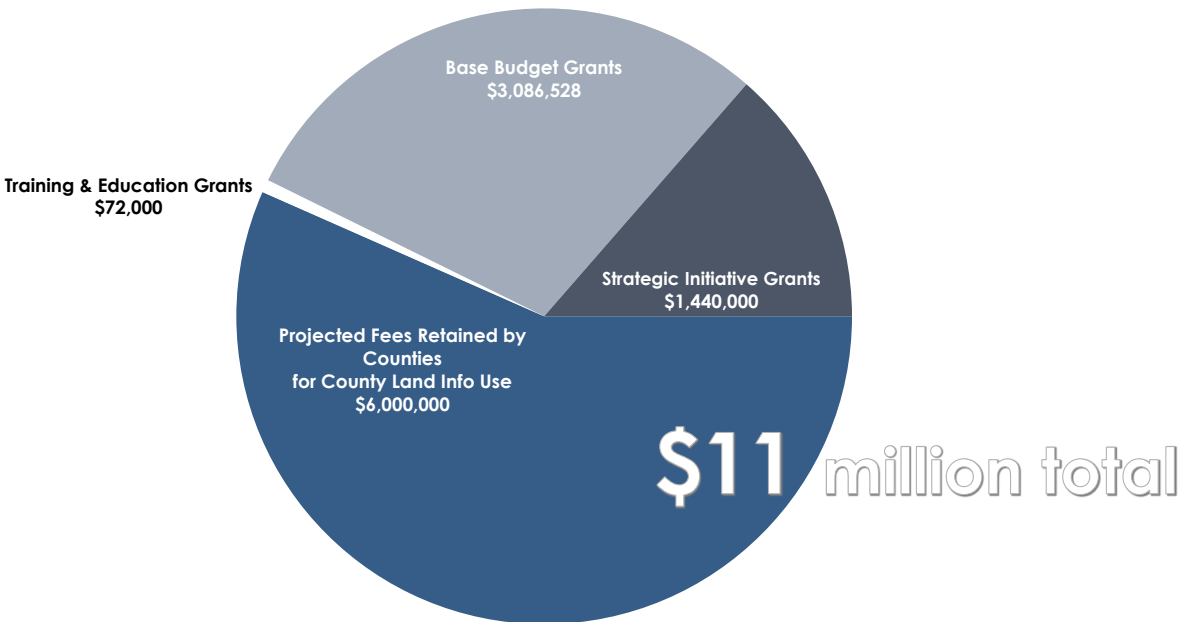


Figure 1. Projected 2025 County Land Information Funding – Fees Retained and WLIP Grants

# REVENUE TREND: HISTORICALLY LOW LEVELS CONTINUE

The number of documents recorded and thus Land Information Fund revenue varies from year to year. For each of the last 30 years, the annual total has equaled an average of 1,247,297 documents recorded per year. This would correspond to \$8,731,079 in Land Information Fund revenue (at \$7 submitted per document recorded).

Due in large part to the increase in mortgage interest rates and a limited supply of housing on the market in 2023-2024, in State Fiscal Year 2024 the register of deeds instrument recordings declined to the lowest point in 30 years. FY 2025 saw a slight uptick. Figure 2 illustrates the revenue trend over time.

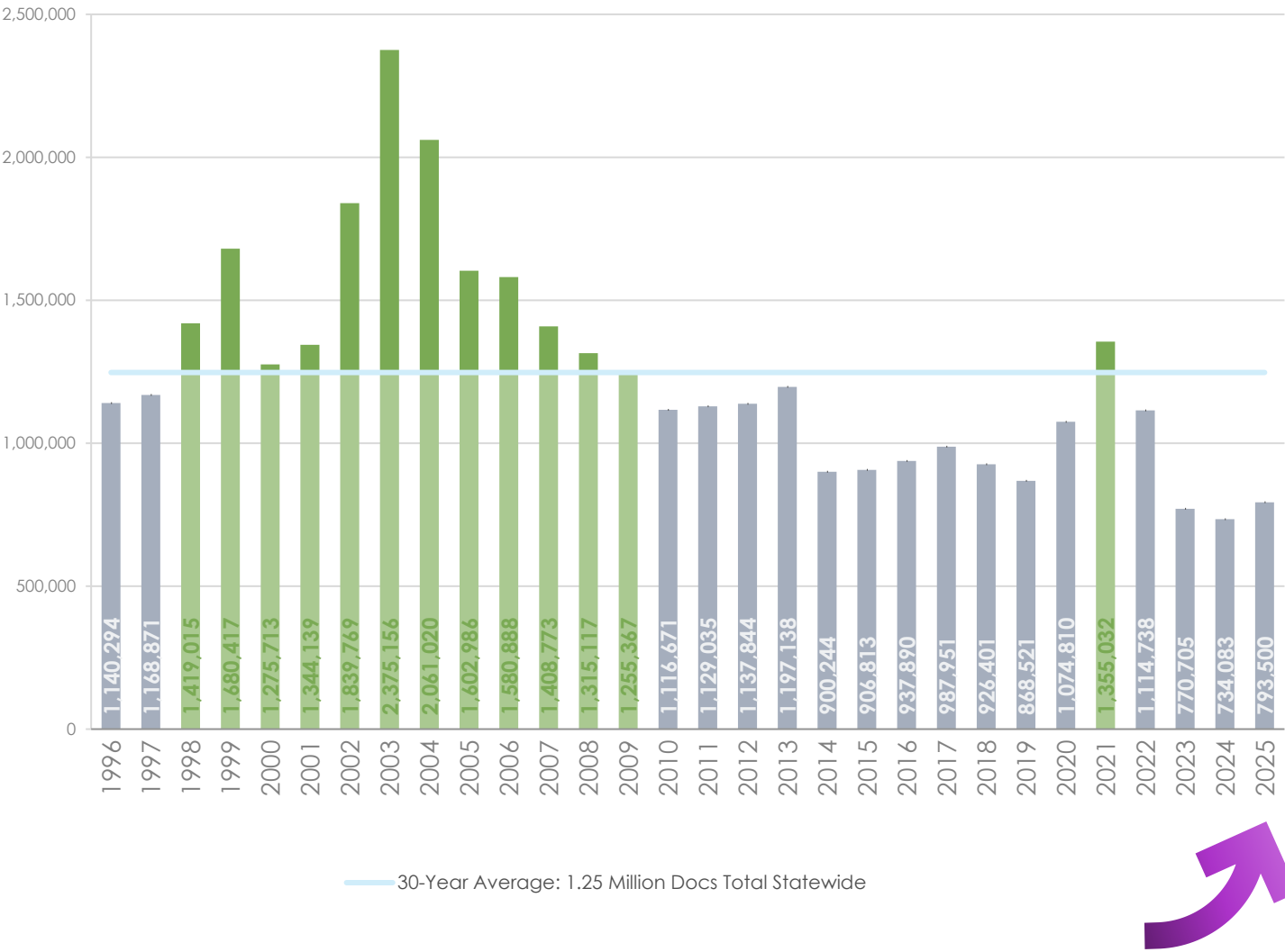
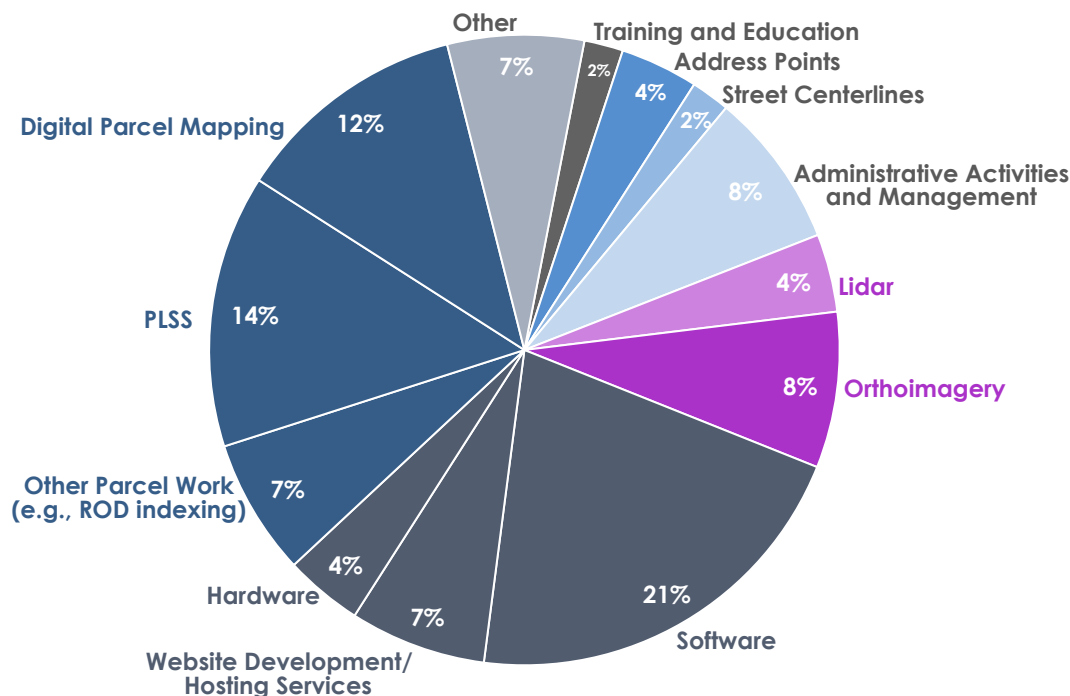


Figure 2. Number of Register of Deeds Documents Recorded Statewide Under s. 59.42(2)(ag)1 or e

## EXPENDITURE OF RETAINED FEES AND GRANTS IN 2024

Counties submit annual expenditure reports on how WLIP retained fees and grants were utilized in the previous year and categorize their expenditures in a Retained Fee/Grant Report, in keeping with s.59.72(2)(b).

In 2024, counties retained fees and received grants for land information totaling \$9.9 million. The dollars spent on land information in 2024 were devoted to the areas depicted in Figure 2.



**Figure 3. County 2024 Expenditures Reported**

Roughly consistent with previous years, Figure 3 illustrates that a third of WLIP funding was used for the development and maintenance of county parcel datasets, including Public Land Survey System remonumentation and other parcel work.

About a third of the funding was used for computer hardware, software, and website development and hosting. These expenditures help to provide convenient access to land records through searchable databases, online interactive maps, and various types of mapping applications.

Eight percent was spent on orthoimagery and four percent on lidar. Some lidar and orthoimagery acquisitions are packaged together.

The remaining funding supported a diverse range of activities, including the development of address points and street centerlines to meet Next Generation 9-1-1 standards. A portion of funding also goes to administrative activities and management.

# FUTURE GRANT PROJECTIONS

Figure 4 shows grants already awarded and the projected Land Information Program budget for the next few years.

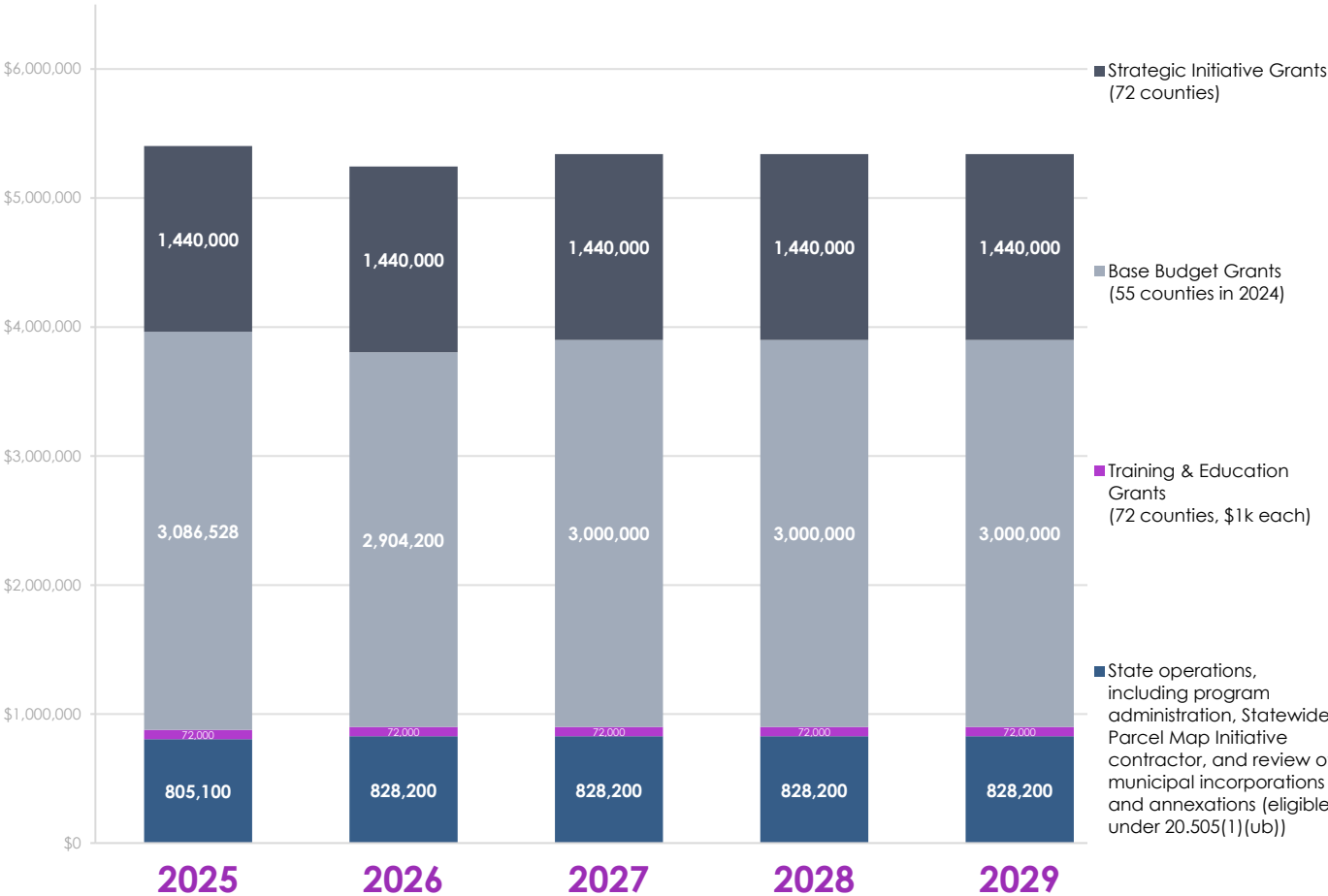


Figure 4. Projected Land Information Program Budget

If implemented as depicted in Figure 4, in 2025 all counties would receive at least \$121,000 in WLIP funding, made up of retained fees, Base Budget grants where applicable, a \$1k Training & Education grant, and a \$20k Strategic Initiative grant.

Projected WLIP Funding to Counties	
≥ \$100k	Base Budget grant + Retained fees
\$ 1k	Training & Education grant
\$ 20k	Strategic Initiative grant
≥ \$121k	per county

Such a scenario would mean that **over 80% of Land Information Fund spending will be invested in grants to counties** for local land records modernization.

DOA is mindful that utilization of Land Information Fund revenue must be consistent with statutory spending authority as described by state statutes 16.967, 20.505(1)(ub-ud), and schedule under s.20.005(3), and should be for well-defined activities with statewide benefits.