



Wisconsin Legislative Bulletin

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Wisconsin Housing Prediction

The 2012 housing outlook for Wisconsin in general is weak. According to the Milwaukee Biz Times, Jan. 23, the market in Milwaukee and southeastern Wisconsin is showing some signs of improvement:

	2011	2012
Inventory levels - Milwaukee	15 months	11 months
Housing starts - SE Wisconsin	858	887

In 2011 the average home sale price in southeastern Wisconsin fell 7.4 percent to \$172,066 according to the data from Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors in Milwaukee County, home sale prices fell 10.59 percent to \$138,004.

Foreclosures are to blame in part for the decline of home values. The good news is foreclosures were down about 18 percent in 2011 to 23,243, according to University of Wisconsin - Whitewater economics professor Russell Kashian. In comparison to pre-recession levels, however, foreclosures are still 100 percent higher.

Another concern in this area is the unknown shadow market. Many lenders are believed to be holding large numbers of foreclosed home that they have not yet put on the market. Dr. Mark Eppli, professor and real estate chair at Marquette University, is quoted to say that the single-family residential market is still going to be in trouble well into 2013.

First Look at 2012 Property Tax Totals

Property taxes collected across Wisconsin in 2012 will total about \$9.5 billion (b), and rise less than 1% over the prior year (see graph below), according to new WISTAX estimates. Based on preliminary state figures, the projected change would be the smallest in 15 years and could be the second smallest in 25. (All totals are net of state levy and first dollar tax credits.)

[Click HERE](#) for the entire story ...

Worker's Compensation Bill Update

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce report that last week, the Worker's Compensation Advisory Council approved draft language that will change Wisconsin worker's compensation laws.

Amongst other things, the bill includes increasing the maximum weekly compensation for permanent partial disability, lowering the standard deviations used to determine the reasonableness of a disputed health service fee to 1.2 standard deviations from the mean, and requiring the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to conduct an audit of the databases certified by the DWD. The bill language should be available later this week.

BILL TRACKING -General

AB31 Retailers Discount Sales Tax (Kooyenga) (Homeland Security and State Affairs)

Retailers currently are prohibited to offer any promotion to discount sales tax from a purchase. This eliminates the prohibition allowing retailers to advertise such sales with the assumption that the retailer will be responsible for applicable sales tax.

AB289 Eliminating Damages in Employment

Discrimination Cases (Litjens) (Judiciary and Ethics)

This bill eliminates the awarding of compensatory and punitive damages to persons who have been discriminated against in employment or subjected to unfair honesty or genetic testing. Under the bill, DWD may still award to such a person back pay, costs, and attorney fees.

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