



One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703
Email: Fiscal.Bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov
Telephone: (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873

January 18, 2017

Representative John Nygren, Assembly Chair
Senator Alberta Darling, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Representative Nygren and Senator Darling:

Annually, this office prepares general fund revenue and expenditure projections for the Legislature prior to commencement of legislative deliberations on the state's budget.

In the odd-numbered years, our report includes estimated revenues and expenditures for the current fiscal year and tax collection projections for each year of the next biennium. This report presents the conclusions of our analysis.

Comparison with the Administration's November 21, 2016, Report

On November 21, 2016, the Departments of Administration and Revenue submitted a report to the Governor and Legislature that identified general fund revenue and expenditure projections for the 2016-17 fiscal year and the 2017-19 biennium. That report, required by statute, identifies the magnitude of state agency biennial budget requests and presents a projection of general fund tax collections.

Our analysis indicates that for the three-year period, aggregate general fund tax collections will be \$454.6 million higher than those of the November 21 report (\$63.4 million in 2016-17, \$145.3 million in 2017-18, and \$245.9 million in 2018-19).

Based upon the November 21 report, the administration's general fund condition statement for 2016-17 reflects a gross ending balance of \$104.8 million and a net balance (after consideration of the \$65.0 million required statutory balance) of \$39.8 million.

Our analysis indicates a gross balance of \$427.2 million and a net balance of \$362.2 million. This is \$322.4 million above that of the administration's report. The 2016-17 general fund condition statement is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Estimated 2016-17 General Fund Condition Statement

	<u>2016-17</u>
Revenues	
Opening Balance, July 1	\$331,038,000
Taxes	15,503,600,000
Departmental Revenues	
Tribal Gaming	24,385,600
Other	<u>518,899,600</u>
Total Available	\$16,377,923,200
Appropriations	
Gross Appropriations	\$17,015,005,400
Transfers to Transportation Fund	39,458,300
Compensation Reserves	18,616,800
Biennial Appropriation Adjustment	-4,665,700
Sum Sufficient Reestimates	-55,361,100
Less Lapses	<u>-1,062,303,100</u>
Net Appropriations	\$15,950,750,600
Balances	
Gross Balance	\$427,172,600
Less Required Statutory Balance	<u>-65,000,000</u>
Net balance, June 30	\$362,172,600

The factors that cause the \$322.4 million difference are as follows. First, based on economic forecasts and tax collections to date, our estimated tax collections are \$63.4 million above the projections of the November 21 report. Second, departmental revenues (non-tax receipts deposited into the general fund) are projected to be \$33.0 million above the administration's estimate. Third, estimated net appropriations are \$226.0 million below those shown in the November 21 document.

The net appropriation reduction of \$226.0 million is primarily due to sum sufficient appropriation reestimates of -\$45.3 million and increased lapses (appropriated amounts that will revert to the general fund) of \$176.0 million. A large portion of the lapse difference is due to projected underspending in the medical assistance (MA) program.

The updated fund condition statement reflects an estimated GPR lapse from the Department of Health Services' medical assistance appropriations of \$312.5 million, which is \$137.5 million more than the lapse amount included in the administration's November 21 report. The current estimate is based on the Department of Health Services' MA quarterly status report to the Joint Committee on Finance from December, 2016. According to that report, MA GPR

expenditures in the 2015-17 biennium are projected to be lower than the Act 55 budget by 5.5%. The principal reasons for the lower expenditures are a lower-than-anticipated enrollment in BadgerCare Plus (particularly in the childless adult group), a higher federal matching percentage, lower managed care capitation rates, and lower utilization in certain fee-for-service categories (particularly nursing homes and personal care).

General Fund Tax Revenues

The following sections present information related to general fund tax revenues for 2016-17 and the 2017-19 biennium. The information provided includes a review of the U.S. economy in 2016, a summary of the national economic forecast for 2017 through 2019, and detailed general fund tax revenue estimates for the current fiscal year and the next biennium.

Review of the National Economy in 2016

In January, 2016, this office prepared updated revenue estimates for the 2015-17 biennium based on the IHS Markit, formerly IHS Global Insight, January, 2016, forecast for the U.S. economy. The forecast predicted real (inflation-adjusted) U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 2.7% in 2016 and 2.9% in 2017.

Going into 2016, economic growth slowed sharply in the fourth quarter of 2015 (estimated at 0.9%). The growth was largely due to momentum in residential housing and sustained growth in consumer spending. However, drags on the economy included continued weakness in the industrial sector, excessive business inventories, and a strong dollar (which made imports cheaper and U.S. exports more expensive). Notably, low energy prices resulted in capital spending on mines and wells to sharply contract in the third and fourth quarters of 2015. This caused a plunge in oil-sector earnings and contributed to a sizable drop in corporate economic profits (-22.3% in the fourth quarter). Nevertheless, IHS Markit expected that the industrial sector would improve in 2016 once businesses began to restock their inventories and energy sector capital spending rebounded. When combined with anticipated strength in consumer demand, IHS Markit expected that growth would accelerate over the course of 2016.

The January, 2016, IHS Markit forecast incorporated the following assumptions into its analysis: (a) that the average price of oil would decline from \$54 per barrel in 2015 to \$48 per barrel in 2016 before increasing to \$58 per barrel in 2017; (b) that the Federal Reserve would increase its target for the federal funds rate at a steady, moderate pace until it reached 3.25% by the end of 2018; (c) the inflation-adjusted, trade-weighted value of the dollar would appreciate against the U.S.'s broad index of trading partners through the first half of 2016 up to 17.7% higher than its average value in the second half of 2014, and then begin a steady decline throughout the forecast period; (d) that the federal tax on high-premium insurance plans would be postponed until 2020; (e) that the accelerated depreciation allowances on equipment would be made permanent, rather than sunset after 2019; (f) that grants-in-aid to state and local government and local highway spending would increase more than previously forecast; and (g) that the federal gasoline tax would remain at the same level.

The national economy grew more slowly than forecast for 2016. Real growth in U.S. GDP is

now estimated at 1.6%, which is 1.1% lower than previously estimated. GDP growth slowed in 2016 due to the continued drawdown of excessive business inventories, a continued decline in energy sector capital spending, and the continued combination of a strong dollar and weak global growth (which caused imports to grow faster than exports, thereby reducing GDP growth). Notably, manufacturing growth remained weak at 0.1% for the year.

The slow growth at the end of 2015 carried over into 2016, as real GDP grew by an estimated 0.8% in the first quarter. Despite ongoing growth in employment (1.9%) and income (1.3%), consumer spending was weaker than anticipated (1.6%), especially for automobile sales. The pace of real GDP growth increased in the second quarter to 1.4%, as personal incomes and consumer spending jumped 4.9% and 4.6%, respectively. However, excess private inventories were again a drag on GDP growth, reducing the rate of growth by an estimated 1.2 percentage points.

Real GDP growth increased sharply in the third quarter to 3.5%. Net exports contributed an estimated 0.9 percentage points of that growth, with a surge in soybean exports related to a bad harvest in South America accounting for all of the gain in exports (10.0%). Consumer spending remained strong (3.0%), especially for motor vehicle sales, which had recovered from a weak first quarter. The Dow Jones Industrial Average Index rallied to an all-time record high in July and continued to rise through the end of the year. Further, oil prices rebounded and as a result the downward trend in energy sector capital spending started to reverse course.

Real GDP growth slowed to 1.5% in the fourth quarter. Consumer spending continued to grow (2.5%) as real household net worth reached an all-time high. In addition, industrial production increased for the first time in over a year, with mining activities leading the way. However, growth was dampened by a substantial widening of the trade deficit due to downward pressure on exports from a strong dollar.

Overall, growth in consumer spending continued in 2016, with nominal (i.e., not adjusted for inflation) personal consumption expenditures (PCE) rising by 3.8%. Consumer spending was supported by low energy prices and growth in employment, real disposable income, and household net worth. Private non-farm payrolls grew slightly slower than the previous year at 1.9% in 2016, which is an average of nearly 200,000 jobs per month. Manufacturing employment lagged behind, however, shrinking by an estimated 0.3% in 2016.

Federal fiscal policy was mostly consistent with IHS Markit's assumptions last January, but Federal Reserve monetary policy was not. IHS Markit had estimated that the Federal Reserve would increase the federal funds rate to 1.5% by the end of 2016. However, due in part to low inflation and slower than predicted real GDP and employment growth in the first half of 2016, the Federal Reserve refrained from raising the federal funds rate until its December meeting. The Federal Reserve raised the federal funds rate by 25 basis points to a target range of 0.50% to 0.75%.

Oil prices declined and then sharply rose throughout the year as forecasted, but at prices lower than anticipated in the first three quarters. Brent spot prices bottomed out at \$26.01 per barrel in mid-January with an average price of \$33.70 per barrel over the first quarter. Average U.S. gasoline prices fell 28 cents to \$1.96 per gallon. As prices remained low, the Baker Hughes

count of rigs drilling for oil and natural gas fell to a historic 71-year low of 404 in May. However, oil prices rose throughout the remainder of the year, and the Baker Hughes count steadily increased to 658 rigs. In the fourth quarter, Brent spot prices increased significantly. As of January 9, 2017, the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that the U.S. average gasoline price had increased to \$2.39 per gallon and the Brent spot price to \$54.39 per barrel. A contributing factor in the rise was an agreement by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other major oil producing nations to cut supplies by 1.8 million barrels per day in the first six months of 2017.

National Economic Forecast

Under the January, 2017, forecast, IHS Markit predicts real GDP growth of 2.3% in 2017, 2.6% in 2018, and 2.3% in 2019. The main drivers of growth are expected to be consumer spending, business fixed investment, and residential investment. However, the trade deficit is forecast to increase due to an appreciating U.S. dollar and growing domestic demand for imports, thereby dampening real GDP growth.

The 2017 forecast is based on the following key assumptions. First, the forecast assumes that the new Trump administration and Congress will lower the average effective personal income tax rate from 21.0% to 19.5% and lower the statutory corporate tax rate from 35% to 20% (partially offset by reducing tax deductions and credits). Second, the forecast also assumes a \$250 billion increase in federal infrastructure spending over the next ten years. Third, the 2017 forecast assumes that the Federal Reserve will increase the federal funds rate by 75 basis points in each of the next three years to 1.50% by the end of 2017, 2.25% by the end of 2018, and 3.00% by the end of 2019. Fourth, the Brent spot crude oil price is projected to average \$54 per barrel in 2017 and \$57 per barrel in 2018. Fifth, the inflation-adjusted, trade-weighted value of the dollar for the broad index of U.S. trading partners is expected to increase 3.3% between fourth-quarter 2016 and fourth-quarter 2017, where it will reach its peak value at 5.5% above the 2016 average, followed by a steady decline. Finally, real GDP growth of major and other important U.S. trading partners is assumed to average 1.7% annually and 3.5% annually, respectively.

The 2017 forecast is summarized in Table 2, which reflects IHS Markit's January, 2017, baseline outlook. Selected baseline projections are presented in more detail below, with alternative optimistic and pessimistic scenarios discussed thereafter.

TABLE 2

**Summary of National Economic Indicators
IHS Markit Baseline Forecast, January, 2017
(\$ in Billions)**

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
Nominal Gross Domestic Product	\$18,564.5	\$19,428.4	\$20,365.3	\$21,269.3
Percent Change	2.9%	4.7%	4.8%	4.4%
Real Gross Domestic Product	\$16,656.1	\$17,033.4	\$17,482.8	\$17,883.3
Percent Change	1.6%	2.3%	2.6%	2.3%
Consumer Prices (Percent Change)	1.3%	2.5%	2.1%	2.5%
Personal Income	\$16,007.0	\$16,736.0	\$17,606.2	\$18,533.9
Percent Change	3.5%	4.6%	5.2%	5.3%
Nominal Personal Consumption Expenditures	\$12,751.5	\$13,334.4	\$13,985.5	\$14,683.2
Percent Change	3.8%	4.6%	4.9%	5.0%
Economic Profits	\$2,094.1	\$2,261.6	\$2,370.0	\$2,377.6
Percent Change	0.3%	8.0%	4.8%	0.3%
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	4.6%	4.3%	4.1%
Total Nonfarm Payrolls (millions)	144.3	146.2	148.0	149.7
Percent Change	1.7%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%
Light Vehicle Sales (millions)	17.41	17.38	17.57	17.56
Percent Change	0.0%	-0.1%	1.1%	0.0%
Sales of New and Existing Homes (millions)	6.006	6.109	6.083	6.201
Percent Change	4.7%	1.7%	-0.4%	1.9%
Housing Starts (millions)	1.162	1.223	1.320	1.387
Percent Change	4.8%	5.2%	8.0%	5.1%

Consumer Prices. The consumer price index (CPI) increased by 1.3% in 2016. IHS Markit expects the CPI to increase by 2.5% in 2017, 2.1% in 2018, and 2.5% in 2019. Although a strong dollar is expected to depress the price of imports, the CPI is nevertheless expected to slightly increase due to higher oil prices and wage inflation from a tighter labor market. Overall, the rate of core (excluding food and energy) inflation, which was 2.2% in 2016, is forecast to remain steady at 2.2% in 2017, 2.1% in 2018, and 2.2% in 2019. Food prices, which grew only by 0.3% in 2016, are expected to increase by 1.2% in 2017, 2.4% in 2018, and 3.0% in 2019. Energy prices, which fell by 6.3% in 2016, are expected to grow by 8.1% in 2017, 1.3% in 2018, and 4.0% in 2019.

Monetary Policy. The Federal Reserve raised its target range for the federal funds rate to

0.50% to 0.75% in its December meeting, and projected three 0.25 percentage point increases in each of the next three years to an upper bound of 3.00% in 2019. IHS Markit also projects the same rate increases, as it anticipates that the PCE deflator, the Federal Reserve's favored inflation indicator, would not rise to the Fed's growth target of 2.0% until 2019.

Fiscal policy, growth in prices and wages, and higher demand for loans are projected to lead to higher interest rates. In 2016, the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note averaged 1.84% and the rate for a 30-year conventional fixed-rate mortgage averaged 3.62%. IHS Markit expects that average annual yields on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note will increase significantly to 2.69% in 2017, 3.16% in 2018, and 3.84% in 2019. IHS Markit also expects the average annual interest rate on 30-year conventional fixed-rate mortgages to increase to 4.26% in 2017, 5.05% in 2018, and 5.80% in 2019.

Personal Income. Personal income grew by an estimated 3.5% in 2016 and average hourly earnings rose by 2.9%. IHS Markit forecasts personal income growth to accelerate to 4.6% in 2017, 5.2% in 2018, and 5.3% in 2019. Employment gains and wage increases are expected to drive income growth, with wage gains continuing to outpace inflation. Federal tax cuts assumed to be implemented in 2017 are also projected to increase incomes. Real household net worth, supported by rising incomes and real estate prices, grew by 4.3% in 2016. Growth is forecast to slow down to 3.0% in 2017, 2.6% in 2018, and 2.1% in 2019.

Personal Consumption. As noted, nominal PCE grew by an estimated 3.8% in 2016. IHS Markit forecasts that nominal PCE will grow by 4.6% in 2017, 4.9% in 2018, and 5.0% in 2019, supported by employment growth and wage gains. Further, the forecast expects sizable increases in household spending on natural gas, electricity, and heating oil in the first quarter of 2017. Growth is expected to ramp up in 2018 due to federal fiscal policy, including tax cuts and increased spending on infrastructure, and due to a jump in growth in real disposable income (2.7% in 2017, 4.1% in 2018, and 3.0% in 2019).

Sales of consumer items generally subject to the state sales tax (such as most durable goods, clothing, restaurant meals and accommodations, and certain taxable services) grew by an estimated 3.6% in 2016, while sales of nontaxable items (such as food for home consumption, gasoline, certain medical equipment and products, and most services) grew 3.9%. Based upon the IHS Markit baseline forecast, consumption of taxable items is estimated to grow by 3.6% in 2017, 5.1% in 2018 and 4.9% in 2019. Sales of nontaxable items are estimated to grow by 5.0% in 2017, 4.8% in 2018, and 5.1% in 2019.

Corporate Profits. After falling by 5.5% in 2015, before-tax profits grew by 3.0% in 2016. IHS Markit forecasts that before-tax profits will pick up to 8.2% growth in 2017. Economic profits, which are adjusted for inventory valuation and capital consumption at current cost and thus are not affected by federal tax laws, fell by 3.0% in 2015, grew by only 0.3% in 2016, and are forecast to jump 8.0% in 2017. The forecasted growth in 2017 and 2018 reflects IHS Markit's assumption that the statutory federal corporate tax rate will decrease in late 2017 from 35% to 20%, with many but not all tax preferences and "loopholes" being removed. This may lead to repatriation of corporate profits earned in foreign markets. Corporate profits are also estimated to increase due to recovery in the energy sector as oil prices rebound. Before-tax profits are expected

to grow 3.4% in 2018 and 0.5% in 2019. Likewise, economic profits are expected to grow 4.8% in 2018 and 0.3% in 2019.

Employment. Total nonfarm payrolls rose slightly more than projected at an estimated 2.5 million new jobs in 2016, decelerating from a gain of 2.9 million in 2015. The biggest increases were in health care and professional business services. By contrast, manufacturing employment decreased by 0.26% for the first time since 2010 and the mining sector saw by far the largest job losses (-15.5%). Overall, the unemployment rate improved from 5.3% in 2015 to 4.9% in 2016. Notably, the labor force participation rate grew by 0.2% to 61.4% in 2016 for the first time since 2006.

IHS Markit forecasts that real GDP growth will lead to steady improvement in the unemployment rate to 4.6% in 2017, 4.3% in 2018, and 4.1% in 2019. IHS Markit anticipates that stimulative fiscal policy will boost job gains in 2018, which would otherwise have been forecast to decelerate. Total nonfarm payrolls are expected to continue to increase, albeit at a slower pace, by 1.9 million in 2017, 1.8 million in 2018, and 1.7 million in 2019. IHS Markit also forecasts that the labor force participation rate will continue to increase to 61.7% by the end of 2019. The largest job gains are forecast for health care and professional business services. Manufacturing employment is expecting to grow by 0.2% in 2017, 0.9% in 2018, and 1.6% in 2019.

Housing. Overall home prices have rebounded since the recession and now exceed their pre-recession peak. In 2016, average prices of existing homes increased by 3.6% and average prices of new homes grew by 3.4%. Although housing starts (1.16 million) grew by 4.8%, sales of new homes (0.56 million) grew by 12.6%, and sales of existing homes (5.44 million) grew by 4.0% in 2016, they still have not reached their pre-recessionary peaks of 2005 (2.07 million, 1.28 million, and 7.08 million units respectively).

IHS Markit expects the housing market to continue to recover, supported by growth in employment and real incomes. Mortgage rates, although expected to rise, are forecast to remain relatively low. Sales of new homes are forecast to increase by 15.3% in 2017, 9.7% in 2018, and 3.7% in 2019. Existing home sales are forecast to remain steady, increasing by 0.3% in 2017, decreasing by 1.6% in 2018, and increasing by 1.7% in 2019. IHS Markit expects that rising prices, low inventories of unsold homes, and low rental vacancy rates will induce builders to accelerate construction activity in both 2017 and 2018, with multifamily structures accounting for approximately one-third of housing starts. Housing starts are expected to increase to 1.2 million in 2017, 1.3 million in 2018, and 1.4 million in 2019.

The forecast assumes that federal policy changes will leave the income tax deduction for mortgage interest payments and the standard deduction unchanged. Alterations to these deductions could negatively impact the housing sector (increasing the standard deduction would reduce the number of homeowners who would benefit by itemizing their deductions for mortgage interest payments).

Business Investment. Real investment in nonresidential structures declined by 2.8% in 2016, primarily due to a drastic drop of investment in mining and petroleum structures (-43.9%) in response to low energy prices. After falling to a 71-year low in May, 2016, the Baker Hughes rig

count has steadily increased along with the recovery in oil prices. IHS Markit forecasts that the rebound in oil prices will support investment growth in mining and petroleum structures (growing 42.4% in 2017 and by 12.8% in 2018). As a result, overall investment in nonresidential structures is forecast to grow 6.6% in 2017, 3.3% in 2018, and 1.7% in 2019.

Real spending on equipment dropped 2.5% in 2016, dragged down by weak domestic and export demand, a strong dollar, and a correction in excess inventories. In the third quarter of 2016, investment in equipment is estimated to have decreased four quarters in a row, the first time this has occurred since at least 1947 (when quarterly record keeping began). However, equipment spending is estimated to have picked up in the fourth quarter of 2016 (9.0%), supported by solid gains in aircraft, computers, and light vehicles. This growth is forecast to carry over into 2017 (4.0%), 2018 (5.7%), and 2019 (5.2%), as foreign and domestic demand picks up and the drag from excessive inventories resolves itself.

Intellectual property investment for software, another indicator of business investment, grew by an estimated 4.9% in 2016, and is forecast to grow at a slower rate of 4.2% in 2017, 3.8% in 2018, and 3.7% in 2019.

International Trade. Real net exports were -\$556.6 billion in 2016, representing an increase in the trade deficit of \$16.6 billion. Real exports increased by 0.4%, whereas real imports increased by 0.9%. IHS Markit forecasts that the trade deficit will continue to widen and remain a drag on growth, with real net exports decreasing by 13.9% in 2017, 20.5% in 2018, and 11.1% in 2019.

A key factor in the trade imbalance is that the value of the dollar is expected to rise throughout 2017, bolstered by stronger domestic growth and interest rate increases, and then decline relative to U.S. trade partners in 2018 and 2019 as growth rates and interest rates rise in foreign markets. Another factor is that nominal oil imports are forecast to grow (17.4% in 2017, 6.0% in 2018, and 10.6% in 2019) as oil prices recover from their 2016 lows. The result is increasing trade deficits due to real import growth (4.4% in 2017, 6.4% in 2018, and 5.1% in 2019) outstripping export growth (1.9% in 2017, 2.3% in 2018, and 3.1% in 2019).

IHS Markit's baseline forecast does not incorporate proposed trade and immigration policies by the Trump administration. A trade war could potentially cut into long-term growth, but the short-term effects are unclear.

Alternative Scenarios. IHS Markit's 2017 forecast also includes an optimistic scenario and a pessimistic scenario. Under the pessimistic scenario, the January, 2017, forecast assigns a 20% probability of a two-quarter economic contraction in the first half of 2018 due to strained trade relations with China and Mexico. U.S. exports decline more than imports, and economic conditions worsen across the world. The U.S. dollar increases in value, further undermining export competitiveness. U.S. businesses react by postponing capital investments. The stock market declines markedly, along with consumer confidence. Meanwhile, productivity continues to decline, and thus modest demand-side growth causes inflationary pressure. OPEC oil production cuts (which are not offset by increased domestic production) and inflation prompts the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates, further constricting growth. Under this scenario, disagreements

between the new Trump administration and Congress, as well as a federal government hiring freeze, prevent stimulus spending. As a result, consumer and business confidence deteriorates, leading to declines in business investment, meager growth in consumer spending, and a fall in housing starts. Real GDP growth is estimated at 1.3% in 2017, -1.1% in 2018, and 1.9% in 2019. These growth rates are lower than the baseline forecast by 1.0% in 2017, 3.7% in 2018, and 0.4% in 2019.

Under the optimistic scenario, the January, 2017, forecast assigns a 15% probability of higher real GDP growth than the baseline forecast (0.5% higher in 2017, 0.8% higher in 2018, and 1.1% higher in 2019). On the supply side under this scenario, Trump administration policies boost the economy by rolling back regulations and lowering corporate income taxes, which result in increased capital spending. Stronger business fixed investment and technological advances enhance productivity. The stock market sees strong growth as consumer and business confidence improve. The Federal Reserve takes a cautious approach to raising interest rates, with two rate increases instead of three in 2017. On the demand side, stronger consumer spending and gains in the housing sector are supported by income growth as well as low inflation, interest rates, and oil prices. Additionally, Congress decreases income taxes even lower than forecast, further supporting income and spending. Finally, global growth increases moderately in 2017 and 2018. This relieves pressure on net exports by leading the dollar to decline (which increases above the baseline only in 2019). As a result, real GDP increases by 2.8% in 2017, 3.4% in 2018, and 3.4% in 2019.

General Fund Taxes

Table 3 shows general fund tax revenue estimates for 2016-17 and each year of the 2017-19 biennium. Over the three-year period, these estimates are \$454.6 million (0.95%) higher than the projections released by the Department of Revenue (DOR) last November. By year, the new estimates are higher than DOR's projections by \$63.4 million in 2016-17, \$145.3 million in 2017-18, and \$245.9 million in 2018-19. The estimates for all three of the state's major tax sources (the individual income tax, general sales and use tax, and corporate income and franchise tax) are greater than DOR's estimates in each year. The new estimates are based on the most recent national economic forecast and tax collections data, both of which are generally stronger than in November. The estimates also incorporate all law changes enacted to date.

TABLE 3**Projected General Fund Tax Collections
(Millions)**

	<u>2015-17 Biennium</u>		<u>2017-19 Biennium</u>	
	<u>2015-16</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2016-17</u> <u>Estimated</u>	<u>2017-18</u> <u>Estimated</u>	<u>2018-19</u> <u>Estimated</u>
Individual Income	\$7,740.8	\$8,050.0	\$8,360.0	\$8,710.0
Sales and Use	5,065.8	5,215.0	5,370.0	5,580.0
Corporate Income & Franchise	963.0	900.0	940.0	950.0
Public Utility	360.6	359.7	373.5	378.2
Excise				
Cigarettes	573.4	565.0	565.0	561.0
Tobacco Products	76.1	82.0	85.0	88.0
Liquor and Wine	50.0	51.0	52.0	53.0
Beer	9.0	8.9	8.9	8.8
Insurance Company	177.3	187.0	192.0	197.0
Miscellaneous Taxes	<u>81.4</u>	<u>85.0</u>	<u>87.0</u>	<u>90.0</u>
Total	\$15,097.5	\$15,503.6	\$16,033.4	\$16,616.0
Change from Prior Year		\$406.1	\$529.8	\$582.6
Percent Change		2.7%	3.4%	3.6%

Individual Income Tax. Individual income tax revenues are estimated to total \$8,050.0 million in 2016-17, which represents a 4.0% increase relative to income tax collections in 2015-16 of \$7,740.8 million. Individual income tax revenues are estimated at \$8,360.0 million in 2017-18 and \$8,710.0 million in 2018-19. These amounts represent increases of 3.9% in the first year and 4.2% in the second year.

The January, 2017, IHS Markit forecast projects national personal income growth of 3.5% in 2016, 4.6% in 2017, 5.2% in 2018, and 5.3% in 2019. However, personal income includes both taxable components, such as wage and salary disbursements, and nontaxable components, such as employer contributions for employee fringe benefits and government transfer payments to individuals. The taxable components of personal income are estimated to increase by 3.5% in 2016, 4.9% in 2017, 5.4% in 2018, and 5.4% in 2019. Personal income, as measured by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, does not include income from capital gains realizations, which are subject to state and federal taxation.

Although individual income tax collections are currently 4.6% above 2015-16 collections on a year-to-date basis, collections are estimated to increase 3.5% in the rest of 2016-17 and end the year 4.0% higher than 2015-16. A lower growth rate in the second half of 2016-17 reflects some taxpayers accelerating estimated payments in December, 2016, as opposed to January, 2017, and an increase in refunds in the Spring months due to law changes. The law changes include increasing the standard deduction for married filers, federalizing exemption amounts under the alternative minimum tax, the final year phase-in of the manufacturing and agriculture

credit, and the capital gains exclusion for Wisconsin assets. The capital gains provision was enacted as part of 2011 Wisconsin Act 32, but its initial impact will occur in tax year 2016 due to a five-year holding period requirement. Law changes will also affect future collections as their impact, relative to 2015-16, is expected to grow from -\$77.7 million in 2016-17 to -\$123.6 million in 2017-18 and -\$150.7 million in 2018-19. Otherwise, individual income tax collections are expected to increase over the coming biennium, reflecting the continuation of the national recovery from the 2008-2009 economic downturn.

General Sales and Use Tax. State sales and use tax revenues totaled \$5,065.8 million in 2015-16, and are estimated at \$5,215.0 million for 2016-17. The estimate represents an increase of 2.9% growth over the prior year. Sales tax revenues in the next biennium are estimated at \$5,370.0 in 2017-18 and \$5,580.0 in 2018-19, reflecting growth of 3.0% and 3.9% respectively.

Sales tax collections through December, 2016, (including an anticipated transfer of \$10.0 million from the Department of Transportation for collections related to sales of motor vehicles) are 2.8% higher than the same period in 2015. Accounting for changes in law which reduced collections, year-to-date growth is the approximately equal to 3.0%. Growth is projected to remain at 3.0% for the remainder of the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Corporate Income/Franchise Tax. Corporate income/franchise taxes are estimated to decrease from \$963.0 million in 2015-16 to \$900.0 million in 2016-17. Corporate income/franchise tax revenues are forecast to increase to \$940.0 million in 2017-18 and \$950.0 million in 2018-19. This represents a decrease in revenues of 6.5% in 2016-17, followed by increases of 4.4% in 2017-18 and 1.1% in 2018-19.

The estimate for 2016-17 reflects a 13.9% reduction from our office's January, 2016, estimate of \$1,045.0 million. The revision is based primarily on weak year-to-date corporate income/franchise collections. Through December, 2016, collections were 20.9% lower when compared to the same period in 2015-16. However, collections this year have been affected by certain large one-time refund payments. According to IHS Markit, growth in both economic profits and adjusted before-tax book profits are expected to be higher over the remainder of the state fiscal year as compared to the six-month year-to-date collection period. Similarly, IHS Markit's national measure for state and local income taxes is expected to reverse from a small year-to-date contraction to moderate growth over the next two quarters. Projected corporate income/franchise tax revenues for 2017-18 and 2018-19 reflect the forecast for adjusted before-tax book profits through the remainder of the forecast period, as well certain state tax law changes that are anticipated to have an impact on future corporate income/franchise tax revenues.

Public Utility Taxes. Public utility taxes are estimated at \$359.7 million in 2016-17, \$373.5 million in 2017-18, and \$378.2 million in 2018-19. On a year-to-year basis, these estimates represent a decrease of 0.2% in 2016-17, and increases of 3.8% in 2017-18 and 1.3% in 2018-19. The gross revenues tax group comprises almost 70% of estimated collections, and gross revenues taxes are estimated to increase 0.3% in 2016-17, 5.9% in 2017-18, and 1.7% in 2018-19. Private light, heat, and power companies are the largest taxpayer group among gross revenues taxpayers, and collections from these companies are estimated to increase 0.7% in 2016-17, 6.2% in 2017-18, and 1.6% in 2018-19. This pattern is influenced by a mild winter and

low natural gas prices in 2016 and a return to more normal weather patterns and some "bounce-back" in natural gas prices beginning in 2017. Companies subject to a state ad valorem tax comprise the other group of taxpayers with public utility tax liabilities. Collections from these taxpayers are estimated to decrease 1.2% in 2016-17, and 0.4% in 2017-18, but then increase by 0.4% in 2018-19. The decreases result from falling ad valorem tax rates and the loss of tax base due to depreciation and obsolescence. The largest decreases are expected among telephone companies, while modest tax increases due to new construction are expected for pipeline companies. These companies comprise the two largest ad valorem taxpayer groups.

Excise Taxes. General fund excise taxes are imposed on cigarettes, liquor (including wine and hard cider), tobacco products, and beer. In 2015-16, excise tax collections totaled \$708.5 million. Of this amount, \$573.4 million (approximately 80.9%) was from the excise tax on cigarettes. Excise tax revenues are estimated at \$706.9 million in 2016-17, which represents reduced revenues of 0.2%. The estimated reduction in excise tax revenues is primarily from a decline through December, 2016, in year-to-year cigarette tax collections, which are currently 1.7% lower than collections over the same period in 2015. Excise tax revenues over the next biennium are estimated at \$710.9 in 2017-18 and \$710.8 in 2018-19.

Insurance Premiums Taxes. Insurance premiums taxes are projected to increase from \$177.3 million in 2015-16 to \$187.0 million in 2016-17, \$192.0 million in 2017-18, and \$197.0 million in 2018-19. The estimate for 2016-17 is based, in part, on year-to-date insurance premiums tax collection growth of 5.7%, whereas the estimates for 2017-18 and 2018-19 reflect historic growth trends. The estimates reflect annual growth in insurance premiums taxes of 5.5% in 2016-17, 2.7% in 2017-18, and 2.6% in 2018-19.

Miscellaneous Taxes. Miscellaneous taxes include the real estate transfer fee, municipal and circuit court-related fees, and a small amount from the occupational tax on coal. Miscellaneous tax revenues were \$81.4 million in 2015-16, of which 80.0% was generated through the real estate transfer fee. Based on the economic forecast for the housing sector, as well as collections through December, 2016, miscellaneous taxes are projected to increase to \$85.0 million in 2016-17, which represents a 4.4% increase from 2015-16 collections. Miscellaneous taxes are estimated to increase to \$87.0 million in 2017-18 and \$90.0 million in 2018-19, primarily due to an anticipated continuation of the housing recovery.

This office will continue to monitor state revenues and expenditures and new economic forecasts, and notify you and your colleagues of any further adjustments that may be necessary.

Sincerely,



Robert Wm. Lang
Director

RWL/sas

cc: Members, Wisconsin Legislature