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May 14, 2009

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# “No More Excuses”

*Group calls on policymakers to fix roads NOW!*

LANSING, Mich. – On the heels of a report issued last week showing more than one-third of Michigan roads are now in poor condition, a bipartisan group called for immediate action to fix the state’s transportation network.

A group comprised of labor and business leaders, members of the Transportation Funding Task Force (TF2) and state transportation leaders announced today the introduction of a series of bills to increase funding for Michigan’s crumbling roads and bridges.

“No excuses, just fix Michigan’s roads – that’s our message, and that’s been the message of the taxpayers and drivers of Michigan,” said Mike Nystrom, vice president of government and public relations for the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA). “Today’s announcement now places the spotlight squarely on the Legislature to help make our bridges and roads safe.”

The package of bills – announced at a news conference today at the state Capitol in Lansing – would phase-in increased transportation funding over the next five years, and include a conversion to taxing the wholesale price of gasoline, increase in vehicle

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registration fees, reform vehicle fee ‘banding’ and increase truck registration fees. If maximum funding levels were reached after the end of the 5-year phase-in period, the funding plan would provide about \$1.8 billion in new transportation revenue per year.

“This is an opportunity to invest in our state now and improve the quality of life in Michigan,” said State Representative Pam Byrnes (D-Chelsea), who is the chair of the House Transportation Committee. “We must restore our infrastructure in order to create an environment that attracts job providers back to Michigan. The Legislature must pass these bills now.”

“This is about jobs and creating a competitive business climate,” said Michigan State Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Rich Studley. “No more excuses, it’s time we did the right thing for our job providers – small and large – who are working incredibly hard to keep and create jobs. There are no more excuses, Michigan’s business community needs good transportation.”

“Jobs, jobs, jobs,” said Dennis Gillow, Director of Infrastructure, International Union of Operating Engineers – Local 324 and co-chair of TF2. “As opposed to doing nothing, this new investment in Michigan’s transportation infrastructure will create 46,000 jobs. With unemployment lingering around 13 percent in Michigan, there are no more excuses.”

The package of bills reflects the measures recommended by the TF2 to achieve a “good” level of funding. Improving road quality will save lives, money, time and energy. If passed, these bills would cost motorists an additional \$13 per month. These bills

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would also mean:

- Saving more than 4.5 million hours of commuter time, which also means reducing harmful car emissions and cutting gas consumption by three million gallons.
- Saving over 1,400 lives and preventing over 10,000 injuries.
- Saving Michigan consumers \$250 per year in improved safety, \$300 per year in vehicle maintenance costs and \$450 per year in personal income for an estimated savings total of \$1000.

“Michigan can no longer wait for action, the poor quality of our roads and bridges has already passed the crisis stage,” Nystrom added. “There can be no more excuses. Legislators need to pass these bills, and fix Michigan’s roads now.”

“This is neither a Republican nor Democrat issue,” added Dan Gilmartin, chief executive officer and executive director for the Michigan Municipal League. “This is a Michigan issue – an issue of doing what’s right for Michigan drivers, businesses and taxpayers. Providing safe transportation is a core service of government, and one that our state can no longer afford to ignore. No excuses. It’s time for our elected officials to step up; there are no more excuses.”

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