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# **TRANSPORTATION GROUPS OPPOSE MI TRANSPORTATION BUDGET**

**LANSING, Mich.** – Calling the proposed 2011 Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) budget woefully inadequate, Michigan business and labor leaders today called on lawmakers to reject the plan and begin working immediately on a real solution to the state’s transportation funding crisis.

The State House Appropriations Transportation today voted on the state’s transportation budget – a budget that leaves \$500 million of federal aid on the table and cuts the state highway program by a whopping 62 percent. The budget passed the committee with a 5-3 vote today.

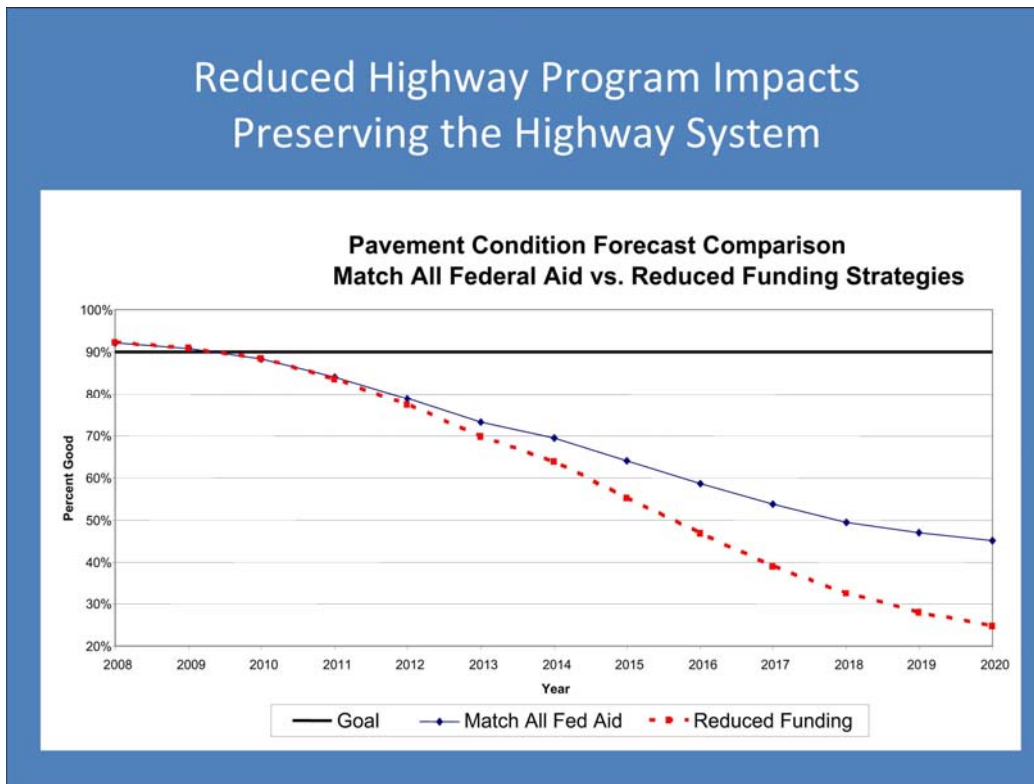
“This budget kicks the can down the road for another year and doesn’t do anything to address the transportation funding crisis we’re facing,” said Mike Nystrom, executive vice president of the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA), and co-chair of the Michigan Transportation Team (MTT). “The bill would send hundreds of millions of gas taxes paid by Michigan residents to Ohio, Mississippi, California and other states.”

Members of the MTT opposed to the budget include the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA), the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA), the Michigan Association of Airport Executives (MAAE), the International Union of Operating Engineers – Local 324, the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters, the Michigan Laborers’ District Council, the Disability Advocates of Kent County, the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce, Aggregate Carriers of Michigan, the American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan (ACEC-MI) and the County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM).

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“We are opposing the budget because it disinvests in Michigan at a time when we are trying to compete with other states,” said Nystrom. “Even if lawmakers find the funding to meet federal matching requirements for the MDOT program, Michigan’s transportation system will continue to crumble.”

MDOT Director Kirk T. Steudle testified to the House Transportation Committee that if Michigan only focuses on getting full federal aid and not increasing state investment, Michigan’s pavement conditions would drop dramatically from 90 percent “good” on the state trunkline system in 2010, to just 50 percent by 2020.



p. 32, FY 2011 Budget Presentation

“Michigan’s transportation system is an economic catalyst for our state,” said Rich Studley, president and CEO of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. “It’s time we did the right thing for our businesses – small and large – who are working incredibly hard to keep and create jobs. The budget currently proposed, however, would cost our state thousands of jobs.”

Under the proposed budget, Michigan will have \$2.4 billion less in state and federal funding for projects between 2011 and 2014 due to declines in state gas tax revenues and the state’s inability to match federal dollars.

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“This budget continues to short-shrift Michigan’s transportation funding,” said Gary Jorgensen, business manager of the Michigan Laborers’ District Council. “With Michigan’s unemployment rate lingering around 14 percent we cannot afford to allow a budget to pass that will cost the state 5,000 to 7,000 jobs.”

The shortfall has forced MDOT to scale back their 2010-2014 Five Year Program, which includes the elimination of 257 road and bridge projects statewide. In addition, 38 counties in Michigan have pulverized more than 100 miles of pavement back to gravel because they don’t have the money needed for repairs.

The budget also drastically underfunds the state’s public transportation system. The bipartisan Transportation Funding Task Force (TF2) recommended a “good” level of investment in public transit as \$773 million – this is \$500 million above the state’s current level of investment.

“More and more Michigan residents are turning to public transportation,” said Clark Harder, executive director of the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA). “It’s clear that a long-term funding solution will have to recognize that as public transportation continues to grow, fewer dollars are captured from gas taxes, meaning less money is available to support those public transportation systems. Michigan legislators must work to create a budget that fully funds all of Michigan’s transportation systems.”

“We hope legislators make the right choice to invest in Michigan’s economy and oppose the proposed transportation budget,” Nystrom said. “The poor quality of our roads and bridges has already passed the crisis stage. No more excuses – Fix Michigan’s roads now!”

Michigan residents can voice their concerns about road funding by calling a toll-free number – **888-719-3087** – set up by MTT. Callers simply enter their five-digit ZIP code to be connected with their legislative offices.

The Michigan Transportation Team (MTT) is a broad-based, bipartisan partnership of business, labor, local government, associations and citizens with the common goal of improving Michigan’s transportation infrastructure. The DriveMI campaign is committed to promoting the development and maintenance of a safe, convenient and efficient transportation network that serves the public, private and economic development needs of Michigan. Please visit [www.drivemi.org](http://www.drivemi.org) for more information on transportation funding or follow them on twitter @drivemi or YouTube at [www.youtube.com/user/FixMIRoads](http://www.youtube.com/user/FixMIRoads).