

• **\$1.5 Billion Transportation Plan Unveiled for Lame Duck**

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The Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association today released a [landmark economic stimulus plan](#) that would rescue the state's crumbling transportation infrastructure.

The plan, which follows last week's recommendations from the [Transportation Funding Task Force \(TF2\)](#), provides a major new investment in the state's roads, bridges, transit, and airports and employs thousands of Michigan workers.

"State policymakers are interested in this new investment plan because it provides a safer and much-improved transportation system for Michigan both now and in the future," said Mike Nystrom, vice president of government and public relations for the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA). "Investing in our infrastructure must now be a top priority for our elected leaders to act on in the lame-duck session."

Recent estimates have shown that Michigan has lost almost 45 percent of its purchasing power to fix roads and bridges in the past five years, because of skyrocketing costs of asphalt, concrete, steel and other construction materials. The MI Asset Management Council reports that almost half of Michigan's roads will deteriorate to poor condition during the next decade. The TF2 pointed out that Michigan stands to lose up to 17,000 jobs and \$1 billion in federal funds each year, because transportation agencies will not have enough revenue to provide the required matching funds.

MITA's new transportation investment plan would cost the average Michigan driver an additional \$12 per month in various fees. However, according to the recently-released TF2 report, a \$1.5 billion investment plan could save the average driver \$250 per year in improved safety, \$300 per year in vehicle maintenance costs and \$450 per year in personal income—or roughly \$1,000 a year in total savings.

The MITA plan repeals the state's per-gallon gas and diesel taxes and replaces it with an 18-percent tax on fuel wholesalers. This change would offset dramatically declining transportation revenues caused by higher gas prices, increasing fuel efficiency and alternative fuel vehicles, all of which have helped make the current gas tax obsolete.

The plan would invest nearly \$1.5 billion above current levels and is a first step towards bringing Michigan's transportation system up to the "good" level as described in the TF2 report, and sustain 46,000 Michigan jobs, according to estimates from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The plan would:

- Preserve 75 percent of MDOT pavement in good condition, translating into an average of 252 additional lane miles of improved pavement each year. (Ninety percent of MDOT roads are currently considered in good condition today, but that number is projected to decline to 65 percent by 2015 under a do-nothing approach);
- Save more than 4.5 million hours of time for commuters, reduce harmful car emission and cut gas consumption by 3 million gallons; and
- Save an estimated 1,400 lives and prevent 10,000 injuries.

"The MITA transportation investment proposal is a sound plan that will not only begin to fix our deteriorating transportation system but also create jobs and economic growth for our state," Nystrom said. "The additional state investment also positions Michigan to secure a higher rate of return of federal transportation dollars from Washington."