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## Whitmer Nudges Legislature On Road Funding

Governor Gretchen Whitmer's office is encouraging the Legislature to act on road funding during lame duck, sources speaking on background said Tuesday.

House Speaker Joe Tate (D-Detroit) is reviewing several different road funding plans and is being asked to decide which avenue the House would like to pursue.

Solutions include a variety of options, including revenue increases, shifting funds in the budget, registration fees and increasing the Corporate Income Tax. Sources said that the governor's office hasn't expressed a strong preference and is more interested in addressing the problem before the Legislature adjourns for the year.

Lance Binoniemi, vice president of government affairs for the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association, said his organization has historically supported user fees like the fuel tax, which are structured so that people who use roads more would pay more for them, but that MITA was "agnostic" at this point because additional funding is the priority.

"This is a problem that current lawmakers have inherited, but they have an opportunity to solve it," he said.

There is a strong appetite among many House Democrats to move on this priority, as a solution for road funding would appeal to the desire within the caucus to "do something big" before losing the majority next term, sources speaking on background said.

It's also Whitmer's last chance to find an answer to her signature 2018 campaign priority with Democratic control of the Legislature. There's been little public effort in either the House or the Senate to address the long-term decline in state-generated funds for roads. Whitmer was able to generate a large number of major projects on state trunklines and

interstates through the sale of bonds in 2021, but those funds are almost exhausted, and a funding cliff is near.

House [Minority Leader Matt Hall](#) (R-Richland), the speaker-elect, also said road funding is one of his priorities, so moving on it before the end of the year while Democrats are still in control may be a good way to test Hall's willingness to act as a partner with the governor's office and Senate Democrats, sources said. (See [Gongwer Michigan Report, November 7, 2024](#)).

It also may be more plausible for House Democrats to get the necessary votes for road funding than on economic development plans, sources said.

Jess Travers, press secretary for the Democratic caucus, was elusive on Tuesday regarding the speaker's plans for the remainder of the term.

"The possibilities are limitless for lame duck, and transportation funding plans are within the boundary of limitless," she said.

– By Elena Durnbaugh

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