



Engineering Companies Want Residents To Call Senate Dems To Move Road Funding

A group of engineering companies today launched an effort to get "thousands" of Michiganders to call on Senate Democrats through October to put forward a new road funding plan.

"The House and the Governor have put forth a plan. The Senate has yet to do that," said Ron **BRENKE**, the executive director of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Michigan. "They are the ones that haven't come forth with a plan, yet, and so we need them all to come together. If it looks different (from) the Governor's and the (House's), that's fine. We just want to get some action. We want to see some movement."

Brenke's organization kicked off phone calls today. On the latest episode of the *MIRS* Monday podcast, he explained that his group will directly connect residents over the phone with their state senator's office.

Senate Democrats' leadership and legislators in politically competitive districts will be majorly targeted.

When *MIRS* asked if a certain Macomb County senator in a competitive district would be receiving a lot of calls, referencing Sen. [Kevin HERTEL \(D-St. Clair Shores\)](#), Brenke said, "You know what? Those senators who are targeted are going to know who they are. They're going to be getting a lot of calls."

"This is an issue from decades ago, quite frankly, and they've taken little swats at trying to fix it over the years. But the longer we wait, the more costly it is, and it's very difficult for local agencies, state agencies ... to plan for projects not knowing if they're going to have available funds for them in the future," Brenke said. "It's a lot easier and less costly to plan fixes than to do them as emergencies when something fails, when bridges fail."

Both the Governor and Republican-controlled House kicked off the year with proposals establishing around \$3 billion in new annual road funding. They agree that any state taxes paid at the fuel pump should go toward road projects, and last month, *MIRS* reported that Senate Majority Leader [Winnie BRINKS \(D-Grand Rapids\)](#) agrees with that concept (See "[Brinks Supports Tax Money Collected At The Pump Going To Roads; Schools Growing More Anxious.](#)" 7/29/2025).

However, House Republicans and Gov. [Gretchen WHITMER](#) differ over how other state sales tax obligations will be covered if motor fuel purchases are no longer going toward them. State sales tax commitments include those required to go toward public schools and local government revenue sharing.

Whitmer suggests placing the same wholesale taxes on marijuana as on cigarettes and other smoking products, as well as taxing "Big Tech industries" like Amazon, Facebook and X. Meanwhile, House Republicans have proposed a massive discontinuation of state-run corporate incentives and special project grants.

The ACEC of Michigan reports representing 6,000 firms altogether, employing more than 600,000 architects, land surveyors, architects and other specialists.

In seven counties, the [Southeast Michigan Council of Governments](#) reports that 38.2 percent of 51,038 lane miles are in poor condition, as well as 39.5 percent of 23,079 centerline miles. For roadways not receiving federal aid under county-led management, 42.6 percent of both lane miles and centerline miles are in poor condition.

When it comes to people picking up the phone and being interested in connecting to their state Senate office, Brenke said it's tough to say.

"I think this is an issue that the residents are really familiar with, and it's something that's on a lot of people's minds, so I'm hoping it's not that difficult to get people to want to make that connection," Brenke said. "We're going to make sure we get a lot of calls – thousands."

The effort has been titled the "Engineering Solutions for Michigan's Road Funding Crisis."

Last week's episode of the [MIRS Monday podcast](#) featured a one-on-one interview with Luke **LONDO**, an independent Hazel Park City Council member. When asked if 2025 has to be the year of a new road funding deal, Londo said "absolutely, unequivocally 100 percent, yes."

"We have no idea what lies in front of us on the economic horizon, particularly as we understand the impact of tariffs and the mess that's the federal budget. If we're staring recession in the face ... 2025 may actually be our last really, really good opportunity to address road funding in a meaningful way and truly fix the damn roads," Londo said.

He described Michigan roads as experiencing dozens of freeze-and-thaw cycles yearly, with Metro Detroit housing a significant border crossing with Canada.

"At the same time, car engines are getting better gas mileage, (there's a) transition to electric vehicles ... our gas taxes (are) going to continue to plummet," Londo said.

Michigan's gas tax – the 31-cent-per-gallon tax separate from the sales tax that's paid at the pump – contributed \$1.165 billion to the Michigan Transportation Fund in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022.

As for creating new arteries of state revenue, Londo – previously a Republican during Gov. Rick **SNYDER**'s era – said he thinks Amazon is kind of a perfect example of companies that "can afford to bear the cost of something like this."

"I think it would be good policy for both parties to just kind of look at the sacred cows and realize that they both need to have some level of compromise, that this is going to be addressed in a long-term sustainable way," Londo said.