



MITA Pushes For Sustainable Road Funding By Year's End As County Roads Crumble

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The Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA) is making a new push to get lawmakers to a \$3.9 billion annual road funding shortfall by year's end as a new County Roads Association (CRAM) report points to crumbling concrete.

The Michigan County Road Association's 2023 County Road [Progress Report](#) pointed to increased vehicle fuel efficiency, electric vehicle tax underpayment, and inflation for the reason that 6,080 miles of the 13,500-mile goal for road repair was obtained in 2023, which was a more than 30-mile difference over 2022.

"The 33 additional miles – a 0.5 percent increase – show we are now merely treading water and that our county road professionals are fighting a losing battle by trying to do the job at current funding levels," said CRA CEO Denise **DONOHUE**.

Donohue said the 83 counties are responsible for 75 percent of the road miles in Michigan and 52 percent of the bridges, with cities and villages being responsible for 17 percent of the roads and six percent of the bridges.

The Michigan Transportation Fund, which is funded through the state gas tax, has consistently dropped. The Michigan Department of Transportation showed a 25 percent cost increase to build roads since 2021.

"County road agencies cannot stretch existing dollars any further. We need more transportation funds in this legislative session, along with prompt adoption of a mileage-based pilot program for the future," Donohue said.

MITA Executive Vice President Rob **COPPERSMITH** said Michigan has failed to meet funding needs for roads and bridges for decades (See "[MIRS Capitol Capsule, Tuesday, January 28, 1997 Issue 018, Vol. XV,](#)" 1/28/97).

"Poor roads and failing bridges contribute to accidents, traffic jams and fatalities, which drive up repair costs. As we continue to underinvest in infrastructure, fixing the problem becomes more and more expensive. We can no longer afford to keep kicking the can down the road," Coppersmith said.

Along with the letters to legislators, maps of the [legislative districts](#) were distributed showing the state of the roads in each district based on the 2022-2023 Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) road condition data.

House District 37 with Rep. [Brad PAQUETTE \(R-Niles\)](#) was the worst district with 58.7 percent of roads in poor condition. Senate District 38 with Sen. [Ed MCBROOM \(R-Waucedah Twp.\)](#) was the worst district with 43.4 percent in poor condition.

The best districts were House District 55 with Rep. [Mark TISDEL \(R-Rochester Hills\)](#), which had nearly 6.8 percent poor roads. Senate District 23 with Sen. [Jim RUNESTAD \(R-White Lake\)](#) was the best district with 20.7 percent in poor condition.

Coppersmith said the current funding was something inherited, but it was up to them to end it.

“The fact is, kicking the can down the road will only make the problem harder to fix, especially as costs continue to rise,” he said.

He praised Gov. [Gretchen WHITMER](#) for her bonding program and the boost of one-time funding from the federal government, but said those funds would be drying up soon and the drought would be unsustainable.

“We can’t afford to keep waiting for solutions. We need to act now before it gets worse,” Coppersmith said.

CRA Chief Deputy Ed **NOYOLA** said the solutions they were looking for were not to build new roads or even majorly reconstruct existing roads, but to preserve and maintain the roads.

“At our recent northern Michigan conference, several of our speakers focused on how county road agencies need to further reduce spending and perhaps do less-complete fixes, engage in staff attrition, and put off needed equipment purchases, among other things, in order to balance the budget,” Noyola said.