



**Transportation borrowing in Wisconsin is out of control.
New revenue is needed now while gas prices are at an all-time low**

October 20, 2015

State Representative Josh Zepnick today called on Governor Walker and legislative leaders to come together to come up with a real solution to Wisconsin's Transportation department funding troubles, especially the high level of debt to future taxpayers. **Zepnick said that the "Governor's repeated calls for more road borrowing, is basically a promise to raise taxes in the future and at even higher levels. That's bad public policy and irresponsible budgeting."**

Zepnick has introduced a plan that allows cities or counties to tax gasoline at the pump with Wisconsin's sales tax, and all revenue be placed in a local infrastructure fund. Under this plan, a city or county with a majority vote approved by their governing authorities could implement up to the 5% state sales tax on the gas pump all locally controlled. For Milwaukee County, this could yield between \$10 and \$90 million annually for Transportation projects.

The Governor's own Task Force (Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission) indicated the need to avoid future debt burdens, saddling future generations of taxpayers with more costs and higher taxes. Historically, the portion of bonding for transportation projects has been on average 6%. Today's proposal would make Wisconsin exceed 12% more than doubling our debt and creating future bills to pay.

Roughly ten years ago, Democrats repealed the automatic gas tax hike because of overwhelming public demand to have a vote in the Legislature as part of the regular process of open and transparent decision-making over taxes and spending.

"I have talked with hundreds of my constituents as well as others throughout the state of Wisconsin. They are not necessarily opposed to higher taxes or fees for transportation. **They simply want public officials to not sneak the money in each year without there ever being a public discussion over spending and revenues.** Furthermore, Milwaukee taxpayers want more money to fix potholes, repair state and county highways to modern specifications, and improve public transportation before WisDOT makes large-scale commitments for questionable Interstate expansions."

"The 4 mile stretch between the Zoo Interchange and the Marquette Interchange greatly impacts the South Side district that I represent. Especially considering access to the growing and thriving Menomonee Valley, the DOT's expansion plans were way overpriced to the tune of \$200+ million per mile. That does not count future maintenance costs. Where is this money coming from?" Zepnick pointed out.

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