WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

June 22, 2015

The Honorable Scott Walker
Governor
115 East Capitol

The Honorable Scott Fitzgerald
Senate Majority Leader
211 South Capitol

The Honorable Robin Vos
Assembly Speaker
211 West Capitol

The Honorable Alberta Darling
Senate Co-Chair, Joint Finance Committee
317 East Capitol

The Honorable John Nygren
Assembly Co-Chair, Joint Finance Committee
309 East Capitol

Dear Governor Walker and Legislative Colleagues,

We are writing to share our perspective related to the current debate on transportation funding in the upcoming 2015-17 state budget. Although tough decisions need to be made in order to budget responsibly, we ask that any resulting spending reductions be equitable and not disproportionately affect out-state areas.

As rural and out-state legislators, we recognize the competing project timelines and infrastructure needs of the diverse districts we represent. We know the decisions that are made now will have lasting impact; not only in this budget cycle but also for many years to come. Our focus is to find a workable solution that protects the long-term sustainability of Wisconsin's transportation network and state government as a whole.

This legislature has made tough choices to ensure that our state's finances are in order. We find the level of transportation bonding in the Governor's budget proposal to be untenable. Currently, $0.17 of every $1.00 of transportation spending goes toward debt service. Under the Governor's budget, $0.25 of every dollar would go towards debt service. This path is simply not sustainable. If a long-term solution cannot be achieved in this budget, we do support the alternative of reining in the state's transportation spending and delaying projects until the required funds are available.

However, we want to be abundantly clear that the decision to make responsible budgeting choices should have a shared and equal impact statewide. The discussion of excluding the Southeast Megaprojects (including the Zoo Interchange) from any cuts or timeline delays would disproportionately affect our constituents and taxpayers outside of the Milwaukee area.

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As you know, safe and reliable transportation infrastructure is critical for commerce and safety across Wisconsin. We cannot allow a singular focus on Milwaukee to bring detrimental effects to industry, tourism, and ultimately to the taxpayers of Wisconsin.

As the budget process continues, we ask that both houses of the legislature and the Governor consider the statewide impact of our transportation finance decisions. We are committed to working together to ensure a sound funding system and quality infrastructure for future generations.

Sincerely,

Rep. Mary Czaja
Member, Joint Committee on Finance

Rep. Amy Loudenbeck
Member, Joint Committee on Finance

Rep. Michael Schraa
Member, Joint Committee on Finance

Rep. Kathy Bernier
68th Assembly District

Rep. Mark Born
39th Assembly District

Rep. Ed Brooks
50th Assembly District

Rep. Rob Brooks
60th Assembly District

Rep. James Edming
87th Assembly District

Rep. David Heaton
85th Assembly District

Rep. Terry Katsma
26th Assembly District

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Rep. Joel Kitchens
1st Assembly District

Rep. Scott Krug
72nd Assembly District

Rep. Bob Kulp
69th Assembly District

Rep. Tom Larson
67th Assembly District

Rep. John Macco
88th Assembly District

Rep. Jeff Mursau
30th Assembly District

Rep. John Murtha
29th Assembly District

Rep. Todd Novak
51st Assembly District

Rep. Al Ott
3rd Assembly District

Rep. Warren Petyk
93rd Assembly District

Rep. Romaine Quinn
75th Assembly District

Rep. Keith Ripp
42nd Assembly District

Rep. John Spiros
86th Assembly District

Rep. David Steffen
4th Assembly District

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Rep. Rob Swearingen
34th Assembly District

Rep. Gary Tauchen
6th Assembly District

Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt
52nd Assembly District

Rep. Paul Tittl
25th Assembly District

Rep. Travis Tranel
49th Assembly District

Rep. Nancy VanderMeer
70th Assembly District

Rep. Tyler Vorpagel
27th Assembly District

Rep. David Murphy
56th Assembly District

Rep. Lee Nerison
96th Assembly District