

Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin: Wisconsinites overwhelmingly oppose delaying critical interstate projects in Milwaukee

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[Madison...] When it comes to resolving the budget impasse and building important infrastructure projects in Wisconsin, residents overwhelmingly want policymakers to “Just Fix It.”

A statewide poll reveals transportation investment has near universal support with 99% of the respondents indicating that Wisconsin’s roads, bridges and public transportation are either “very important” or “somewhat important” to economic development and job growth. And voters are tired of continued delays.

“By a two-to-one margin, Wisconsinites oppose delaying highway reconstruction in the Milwaukee area,” said Craig Thompson of the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin, which sponsored the poll. “When given a choice, 62% of Wisconsinites oppose delaying highway reconstruction in the Milwaukee area instead of raising the revenue necessary to complete the projects. In the Milwaukee area, a whopping 67% of voters oppose reconstruction delays, with 50% strongly in opposition”

The poll, which surveyed 600 likely voters, was conducted May 30-June 1 by Public Opinion Strategies, a respected national public policy polling firm with nearly three decades of experience collecting and analyzing polling data in Wisconsin.

“People are not happy with the status quo, and they certainly don’t want projects left half done,” said Thompson. “Yet, the Governor’s budget takes what was an already inadequate amount of money to complete the reconstruction of our southeast freeways in a timely manner and actually reduces that budget by almost \$300 million. According to a Legislative Fiscal Bureau memo released last week, it will take 70 years to complete the rebuild of these antiquated interstates assuming the funding level proposed by the Governor. And that alarming schedule is without taking inflation into consideration.”

Other key findings of the poll include:

- Nearly half (47%) believe Wisconsin roads have gotten worse over the last five years, only 21% believe they have gotten better.
- A substantial 76% of voters would support paying an additional \$4 month if it meant creating an immediate solution to fix Wisconsin roads.
- The vast majority (83%) supports a pay-as-you go system as opposed to borrowing more money (12%).

Thompson said the public is thirsting for leadership and long-term vision.

“Delaying projects, or simply borrowing more to push the problem off for two more years is not what Wisconsinites are asking for,” Thompson said. “The public is smart enough to know that we can’t solve our significant transportation problems in Eau Claire or Tomahawk by delaying, yet again, the reconstruction of critical interstates in Southeast Wisconsin.”

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