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Sen. Tiffany: DOT secretary must continue reforms

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One of the key appointments Governor-elect Tony Evers will be making soon is Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT). The appointment is subject to the advice and consent of the Senate and my vote for confirmation will be based on a few considerations.
There are innovative reforms that have been implemented by the DOT in the last few years to more effectively spend the $3 billion given to DOT annually. They include Replace-In-Kind, bridge strengthening, and asset management.

Replace-In-Kind allows infrastructure to be replaced as is when safety is not compromised. Bridge strengthening allows bridges to be repaired to meet safety standards rather than completely replaced as required in the past. For example, if a bridge can be repaired for $100,000 to meet future needs, why replace it for $500,000 to a million dollars?

In particular, I urge Mr. Evers and the new DOT Secretary to continue the Asset Management Program. Asset management ensures we fix only what needs fixing. It maintains roads early in the life cycle to prevent more costly repairs when maintenance is done later in the life cycle. The Federal Highway Administration uses asset management.
When the Interstate 94 project is completed south of Milwaukee, we will have spent over $3 billion on three projects in a little more than a decade – the Zoo and Marquette interchanges and I-94.

The investment was needed because they move most of our commerce in Wisconsin. Now, it is time to take a time-out from the megaprojects to maintain the

rest of our transportation infrastructure in Wisconsin. A good starting place is the proposal this fall by Governor Walker for the largest increase in transportation aid to counties and towns in state history.

I believe we can improve our transportation system, without raising taxes, with innovation and discipline. The Department of Revenue projects the state will receive two billion dollars more in revenue from the taxpayers in the next biennium. If more dollars are needed for transportation, it should come from growth in the general fund.

It seems taxpayers agree. In the final two polls by Marquette University this fall, over 60% of respondents said no to increased gas taxes. In the waning days of the election Mr. Evers said he will not raise taxes. With those 60% of voters I will hold Governor-elect Evers and his DOT nominee to his word.