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# WISPIRG, 1000 Friends: Coalition applauds Gov. Walker's suggestion to rethink highway expansions

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MADISON – At a Milwaukee Press Club event on Tuesday, Governor Walker questioned whether the state should continue spending billions of dollars on questionable highway expansions at a time when transportation preferences are changing, and when there is a pressing need to maintain existing infrastructure.

The Coalition for More Responsible Transportation has long urged state leaders to right-size Wisconsin's roadway network and to prioritize fixing the infrastructure we have, instead of adding new, unneeded capacity. Members of the coalition issued the following statements applauding Gov. Walker's comments:

"Governor Walker is absolutely right: Spending billions on bigger, wider roads is not a smart use of taxpayer dollars," said Peter Skopec, Director of the Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG). "Plenty of evidence shows that adding lanes just doesn't work to solve congestion – but it does drain resources from crucial transportation priorities. We need to start solving our transportation problems, from fixing existing roads and bridges to providing mobility for everyone, and not waste money on the type of highway projects that should be in our rearview mirror."

"Governor Walker's statement that Wisconsin should add fewer lanes when it rebuilds highways finally acknowledges our longstanding call to get the state's

transportation priorities straight," said Ashwat Narayanan, Transportation Policy Director at 1000 Friends of Wisconsin. "People are changing the way they travel, new technologies are disrupting traditional driving patterns, and older Wisconsinites are choosing not to or are often unable to drive. Spending billions of dollars on new highway lanes today will stick our children and grandchildren with the bill for infrastructure that they did not ask for, nor will likely use."

"We need to be smarter about how we spend our transportation dollars," said Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator at the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter. "Now and in the future, Wisconsin should have less pollution, less gridlock and more public transit. We have the tools to build a better transportation system. We just need to use them."

"The Governor's comments are a big step in the right direction," concluded David Liners, State Director of the interfaith group WISDOM. "At the same time, our state's record when it comes to investing in 21st century transportation options like public transit, walking and biking has been abysmal in recent years. We urge both parties to take a long-term, sensible view and prioritize the creation of a modern, reliable transportation system in Wisconsin that works for everyone."