



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Lyness: Finding A Road Funding Solution That Works For Hoosiers

99.3 FM

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Our shared goal as Hoosiers of maintaining Indiana's status as the Crossroads of America is facing a dilemma. Over the next 20 years, Indiana will need on average an additional \$1.2 billion annually to adequately fund our transportation infrastructure system. This is why adopting a long-term, sustainable road funding plan is one of the General Assembly's top priorities this session. House Bill 1002 was drafted to implement a data-driven, comprehensive and sustainable plan to fund both our current and future road funding needs. Current data shows that nearly 10 percent of Indiana roads are in poor condition. Due to this, Hoosiers spend on average almost \$500 annually on road-related vehicle repairs. Without addressing funding shortfalls, this will only get worse. Comparably, the House Republican road funding plan would only cost the average driver \$5 per month at the pump. As I listen to my friends and neighbors, I hear a lot of misinformation about road funding in general, and I want to clear a few things up. This plan proposes an increased user fee on gas, diesel and interstate fuel by 10 cents per gallon. These fees are used to pay for state and local roads. Raising the gas tax by just 1 cent only generates about \$31 million. This may seem like a lot of money, but it doesn't go very far in terms of a sustainable funding plan for the whole state. At the same time, cars are continuously becoming more fuel efficient, meaning that less money is being generated by the stationary gas tax we currently have in place. The gas tax hasn't been raised since 2003, and other fuel taxes haven't been increased since 1988. Because of this, the gas tax is losing buying power due to inflation every year.

Political group pushes alternative state infrastructure funding

News and Tribune

Elizabeth Beilman

1/27/17

JEFFERSONVILLE — A significant liberty advocacy group is voicing its opposition of an infrastructure funding bill moving through the Indiana House of Representatives that would raise gasoline taxes. Americans for Prosperity's Indiana chapter claims the majority of Hoosiers agree, despite House members' overall support of the bill. The conservative-leaning nonprofit group held a town hall-style meeting in its Jeffersonville office Friday, with State Senators Jim Smith and Ron Grooms and State Rep. Steve Stemler speaking. About 15 people attended. "When you ask someone, are you willing to pay a little bit more to improve our roads, what a lot of people will say after the first questions is, 'if we can guarantee that it all goes to roads, then yes,'" Justin Stevens, Indiana state director, said. But that wouldn't be the case, at least as the bill exists today. All of the revenue of the state gas excise tax is allocated for highways and roads, but only around 15 percent of what people pay in the gas sales tax goes toward infrastructure. Furthermore, Indiana is only one of 12 states that levies a gas sales tax at all, and only one of four that taxes the full

amount. In Indiana, that's 7 percent. The hikes would bump Indiana up to fifth place in the nation in the amount it taxes fuel, Stevens said. "Knowing that ... would you still support an increase in the gasoline tax?" Stevens said. "The answer is typically, about 90 percent of the time, it's no. http://www.newsandtribune.com/news/political-group-pushes-alternative-state-infrastructure-funding/article_1228cd4e-e4d7-11e6-84bc-6315f9e7f53b.html

Indiana Democrats say GOP road fee is really a tax

Chesterton Tribune

Brian Slodysko

1/27/17

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) - Republicans who control the Indiana Legislature have embraced the term "user fee" to describe the extra amount they want drivers to pay under their proposal to raise money for infrastructure projects. It's a euphemism Democrats and conservative groups seized on Wednesday, emphasizing that no matter how the proposal is marketed, it's still a tax increase. The GOP majority is facing that public relations challenge as it tries to sell a plan that would increase the state's 18-cents a gallon fuel tax by a dime while charging an additional \$15 for vehicle registration. The condition of the state's crumbling infrastructure - and the need to find new revenue to pay for improvements - is the top priority for the legislative session. But it's an awkward conversation for Republicans who over the last decade cut income, corporate and property taxes that primarily benefited the wealthy. The tax increases, or "user fees," they now want to increase will impact motorists of all economic backgrounds. "A user fee or a tax increase - both are one-in-the-same," said Justin Stevens, state director for the conservative group Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of billionaire industrialist brothers Charles and David Koch. "They do that to avoid being seen as raising taxes, but they are raising taxes. Just be honest with us."

http://www.chestertontribune.com/Indiana%20News/indiana_democrats_gop_road_fee_i.htm

Council committee looking at funding options for Eisenhower Bridge

The Herald Bulletin

Ken de la Bastide

1/26/17

ANDERSON – The Capital Improvements Committee of the Madison County Council is exploring several options to fund the county's share of replacing the Eisenhower Bridge in downtown Anderson. The committee, consisting of Council Vice President Brent Holland, R-at large, Councilman Mike Gaskill, R-at large, and Councilman Clayton Whitson, D-1st District, heard from the county commissioners that the options include borrowing the funds from a local bank or re-establishing a Redevelopment Commission for a lease/purchase agreement. The committee is expected to vote on a recommendation to give to the full Madison County Council at the Feb. 14 meeting. Madison County has to have in place by the end of April the \$4 million in matching funds. The county's total share of the project has been estimated at \$5.2 million. The bridge project is expected to cost \$18.7 million, with \$13.5 million being provided through a federal grant. "We have to see the variables and make a decision on a recommendation at the next meeting," Holland said. The committee members were leaning toward a 10-year loan from a local bank. Commissioner John Richwine said preliminary discussions with First Merchants Bank indicated the interest rate would be 3.15 percent on a 10-year loan. He said the commissioners have not had discussions with other banks on a loan and the hope was the interest rate would be lower. Richwine said the commissioners considered a construction loan, but there was a concern about fluctuations in the interest rate. County Engineer Charles Leser said the Indiana Department of Transportation has set a bid date of April 5 for the bridge project.

http://www.heraldbulletin.com/news/council-committee-looking-at-funding-options-for-eisenhower-bridge/article_a251d09c-e427-11e6-9026-175f4b958221.html

Noblesville's Pleasant Street Moving Forward

Inside INdiana Business

Dan McGowan

1/25/17

NOBLESVILLE - The Common Council in Noblesville has approved \$3.75 million to cover some of the early stages of a long-discussed east-west corridor in the Hamilton County city. The funds will cover preliminary design work and land acquisition. The precise route and scope has not yet been finalized, but Mayor John Ditslear says the ultimate location decision will be informed by the initial design phase. Ditslear says without the design phase, residents are left in limbo. "We owe it to them to move forward," he says. "The funding provides my administration with the ability to prepare preliminary designs for the Pleasant Street corridor in order to evaluate and consider the footprint of the project's impact." The project is expected to involve 3-4 lanes of roadway running next to the Midland Trace Trail, providing a corridor between State Road 37 and Hague Road. Research is underway to determine if the route has historical significance. "We've said all along that this road project will present many challenges - but it will create opportunities as well," said Deputy Mayor Steve Cooke, as long as "We can work together to help minimize threats to our local history. And to make sure we do this project in a way that improves connectivity and safe access for nearby residents using multiple modes of transportation." The city says it will hold public meetings through the year as the process progresses.

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/34347714/noblesville-funding-preliminary-pleasant-street-phases>

www.buildindianacouncil.org