



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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State officials confident federal highway funds will come through

Indianapolis Business Journal
Emily Metheny
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State officials are so confident Congress will pass a deal to cover a shortfall in a federal highway fund that they have not solidified contingency plans that would be needed if the money runs out next month. Will Wingfield, a spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation, said the agency has been watching the situation closely and has started to prepare plans. But he said officials feel "pretty confident" that Congress will step in. "Generally speaking, the federal government has kept money flowing for infrastructure," Wingfield said. "At this point, we do not anticipate any impacts to our projects." The federal Highway Trust Fund, which is financed with a per-gallon tax on gasoline, is set to run out of money next month, in part because cars are becoming more fuel efficient. And the U.S. Department of Transportation has said it will cut construction payments to states by 28 percent on Aug. 1 if Congress doesn't act. That's important because the trust fund has allocated \$37 billion to states for highway projects for the year ending Sept. 30 and is the source of most of the federal dollars provided to states for roads and infrastructure. However, the tax has not increased since 1993 and does not adjust with inflation. Cuts mean projects across the country could be delayed, which the White House says could put as many as 700,000 people out of work nationwide. Indiana receives more than 40 percent of its total state highway and transit funding from the federal government, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts. That money is used to match Indiana dollars for highway projects.

<http://www.ibj.com/state-officials-confident-federal-highway-funds-will-come-through/PARAMS/article/48620>

New Bridge Proposal Could Save Millions

Inside Indiana Business
7/17/2014

A group of Indiana and Kentucky leaders advocating for an I-69 bridge across the Ohio River says new modifications could shave \$600 million off the previous proposal. BridgeLink says narrowing the bridge's shoulders and cutting it from six to four lanes would drop the estimated cost to \$800 million. The new plan also adjusts the route, which would eliminate three miles from the span. BridgeLink Executive Director Justin Groenert tells Inside INdiana Business executives plan to seek funding for an environmental impact study during the next legislative session. He says the group was inspired to reduce the project's scale by the I-70 bridge that crosses the Mississippi River in St. Louis. BridgeLink took input from companies involved in the construction and excavation industries.

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/newsitem.asp?ID=66155>

Transportation funding push has Obama hitting the road to site of closed Delaware bridge

Columbus Republic

Darlene Superville

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WASHINGTON — With federal transportation funding about to run dry, President Barack Obama is taking steps to boost the flow of private dollars into public works projects. The new initiative is designed to encourage collaboration between state and local governments and private-sector investors, expand the market for public-private partnerships and make greater use of federal credit programs. Obama's trip is part of a broader effort to press Congress to keep money flowing to the Highway Trust Fund, the source of federal aid to states for surface transportation projects. The fund is expected to begin running out of money next month. The Republican-controlled House passed a temporary funding bill this week to keep transportation aid flowing to states through next May, well after the midterm elections. A similar bill is pending in the Senate, though the chamber's Democratic leaders are expected to vote next week on the House-passed measure. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx welcomed the progress on Capitol Hill, but said a short-term solution "is still insufficient to solve our crisis." Obama supports a short-term fix because he said it will keep construction crews on the job and their projects on track, but he has devoted most of his public appearances this week to pressing Congress to either approve his four-year, \$302 billion transportation proposal or come up with an alternative long-term funding measure.

<http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/e71aff76a8a4992a37155fd957e5a89/US--Obama>

Stopgap highway bill OK'd by House

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette

Ashley Halsey III and Juliet Eilperin

7/16/2014

WASHINGTON – Faced with the threat that federal money for 117,000 transportation projects would begin to dry up in two weeks, the House on Tuesday approved a nearly \$11 billion patch to extend funding through May. The stopgap fix to avert a crisis imperiling up to 700,000 construction jobs won endorsement from the White House, but the Senate is likely to tinker with it before it reaches President Barack Obama's desk. The bill, approved by a 367-55 vote, would transfer \$9.9 billion from the general fund and \$1 billion from a separate trust fund into the rapidly dwindling Highway Trust Fund, which is expected to run in the red starting next month. The general fund transfers would be offset by extending customs fees and a process called pension smoothing, both steps that critics have denounced as gimmicks and "smoke and mirrors." "We shouldn't be paying for filling potholes by creating potholes in Americans' pensions," said Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., who voted against the bill. "This is not a serious or sustainable response to the challenge of an underfunded highway program. Congress should bite the bullet and do its job." The Senate is moving toward its own short-term fix built around those two funding sources and tapping into an array of others. Rather than move forward with that bill, the Senate may amend the House bill to its liking and send it to the White House.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20140716/NEWS03/307169987>

Commissioners Address Paving And Bridge Closures

WBIW.com/1340 AM

7/16/2014

(BEDFORD) - Lawrence County Highway Superintendent David Holmes told the commissioners Tuesday morning that weather conditions has slowed the progress of paving county roads. Holmes also discussed the condition of several bridges in the county. Officials closed Bridge No.54 on Jasper McKeaigg Road and Bridge 53 in Fort Ritner, both truss bridges, after inspectors

found damage to the beams. The damage was done by the de-icing material the county used on roads for snow removal and age. "There is a pretty steep hill to the south side of that bridge and the run off containing de-icing material drained right onto the south end of the bridge," Holmes says. "That was where most of the damage was." Bridge 54 was built in 1897 and rehabbed in 1982. "We have asked for a fracture critical assessment for the bridges which will look at the joints on those two bridges and we are waiting for those results," he added. Bridge 199, a concrete bridge on Tunnelton Dennison Road, was also closed. "One beam failed and another one of the six beams is failing," Holmes says. "We have a couple of options - we could replace the two damaged beams or rebuild the bridge. I recommend we build a new bridge. If two beams have failed and we replace them at half the price of a new bridge what is to say in a couple of years the other beams which are 35 years old won't fail. If you (the commissioners) declare the bridge a state of emergency we can bypass a lot of the paperwork and get quotes quickly and get to work replacing the bridge." The commissioners voted to declare a state of emergency and Holmes will now seek bids from at least three companies to build a new bridge.

<http://www.wbiw.com/local/archive/2014/07/commissioners-address-paving-and-bridge-closures.php>

INDOT, Monroe County battle over I-69 construction noise

Indianapolis Star

Ryan Sabalow

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Complaints of beeping backup warning alarms and roaring heavy equipment at all hours of the night got so bad on the I-69 project that Monroe County officials late last month said enough was enough. The County Commissioners passed a noise ordinance that members hoped would force state highway crews to keep it down between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. But that didn't sit well with state highway officials, who are behind schedule on the fourth section of the interstate. The section runs through Greene County to Bloomington — and right next to the homes of some of the loudest opponents of the controversial road project. On Friday, the Indiana Department of Transportation sued Monroe County, alleging the commissioners do not have legal authority to hinder a state and federal highway project by restricting when work can be done. Equally important, the suit alleges, the ordinance has thrown a monkey wrench into the I-69 project, which is so behind schedule some crews have been forced to work at night to catch up. INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield said \$100 million in contracts have been bid to complete Section 4, which would connect the already-built sections from Evansville to Ind. 37 in Bloomington. Wingfield said contractors already have had to meet noise limits set under the terms of their contracts. He said the delays caused by the ordinance have so hampered crews, it's impossible to say when the new stretches of road might be open to traffic.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2014/07/15/indot-vs-monroe-county-battle-construction-noise/12675777/>

Also <http://indianapublicmedia.org/news/judge-decide-i69-noise-ordinance-days-69578/>

Road to funding Ind. highways is jammed

Kokomo Tribune

Maureen Hayden/Opinion

7/15/2014

If you've driven on either of Indiana's two busiest interstates recently, you'll understand why a blue-ribbon commission last week called for adding traffic lanes to those harrowing highways. The report, issued by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Infrastructure, cited traffic studies documenting the heavy use, high speeds and accident-causing congestion that plague Interstate 65 and Interstate 70. The commission also put a price tag on the fix — expanding the interstates to six lanes from four — at a cool \$2.5 billion. Neither the recommendations nor the cost estimates are new. Calls for fixing Indiana's antiquated

infrastructure are years old, but the sticking point remains money. Earlier this year, Gov. Mike Pence OK'd the release of \$200 million from the state's general fund into the state's Major Moves construction fund. It's being used to expand some small stretches of heavily traveled sections of I-65 that are nearly 50 years old. Another \$200 million may be released after the December revenue forecast, if the State Budget Committee decides there's enough money in the state pot. The blue-ribbon commission, whose members come from the public and private sector, called on Congress to get its act together to replenish the nearly insolvent federal Highway Trust Fund. <http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/x1927861346/MAUREEN-HAYDEN-Road-to-funding-Ind-highways-is-jammed>

Bridges, Rezoning Discussed By Commissioners

StaceyPageOnline

Phoebe Muthart

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Bridges and rezonings took up most of today's Kosciusko County Commissioners meeting. One of the biggest bridge projects is in Warsaw, located on CR 300 North over the Tippecanoe River. It was discussed that an environmental impact study must be conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Division because of mussels in the river. The city of Warsaw is helping with the cost of the study and engineering fees, however, the study is increasing the cost of the project and delaying it. The project, in which box beams need to be replaced, is tentatively expected to begin next summer. A supplemental agreement for the study was approved at today's meeting. The sole bid for a bridge project in Syracuse was opened at the meeting. The bid, from LaPorte Construction Co. Inc. for \$586,304, is well over the engineer's estimate. Since there was only one bid, and it was high, it will be re-bid. On July 29, a new bid date will be announced. The bridge is located on Front Street, north of Medusa Street. The project is tentatively expected to begin after Labor Day. An engineering agreement for a bridge project on Country Club Road, south of Warsaw, was approved, as was a bridge rehabilitation project on Packerton Road, south of Pierceton Road. Both will start next year.

<http://www.staceypageonline.com/2014/07/15/bridges-rezonings-discussed-by-commissioners/>

www.buildindianacouncil.org