



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

September 24, 2015

Illiana Expressway plans thrown out

NWI Times
Keith Benman
9/23/15

The Federal Highway Administration has dropped its appeal of a federal judge's June ruling that essentially sent four years of planning for the proposed Illiana Expressway back to square one. Along with Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner's seeming indifference to the road, the action means any possible construction is at least a half decade away. "It's time for the federal and state transportation agencies to now bring the boondoggle Illiana Tollway to an end," stated Howard Learner, executive director of the Environmental Law and Policy Center on Tuesday. The Center has served as lead counsel in a lawsuit brought in July 2013 by Midewin Heritage Association, Openlands and Sierra Club challenging the Federal Highway Administration's approval of the first phase of planning for the road. The Indiana Department of Transportation did not immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday morning. The \$1.5 billion, 47-mile expressway would run between Interstate 65 just outside Lowell to Interstate 55 in Illinois. [Illiana Expressway plans thrown out](#)

Lawmakers threaten investigation of broken roads

Indianapolis Star
John Tuohy and Tony Cook
9/22/15

Two top Republican lawmakers are threatening an independent investigation of asphalt mixes that could be causing state roads to break apart easily. They're also questioning whether the Indiana Department of Transportation might be partially responsible in the brewing conflict between the agency and the private contractors it hires to build roads. Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso said an outside investigation might be the only way to get answers about how the state bought \$71 million in asphalt that could be defective. "If we can't get to a conclusion, we can use the bully pulpit," said Soliday, chairman of the House Roads and Transportation Committee. "There are only two paths out. You can get an independent third party to take a look at it and say here's the right thing to do, or you let a judge decide it. I'm not real fond of that one. "If they can't agree, then we may have to referee," Soliday said of a possible legislative inquiry. [Lawmakers threaten investigation of broken roads](#)

Road more traveled

The Journal Gazette
9/22/15

Indiana doesn't need more evidence of the urgency of repairing its infrastructure. But as with a road-delay-weary traveler, such evidence arrived over the weekend. For reasons that haven't wholly been determined, the state has discovered that almost 200 recent road projects are in danger of failing "years ahead of schedule," according to the Indianapolis Star. Which projects in what areas of the state have been affected isn't yet clear. But, the Star reported, the Indiana Department of Transportation already has notified local officials that their new roads could be crumbling 30 percent faster than expected. The problem, so far identified in \$71 million worth of recent pavement projects, may be related to the amount of petroleum binder used in the asphalt mix, or it may be related to the use of more recycled asphalt, the Star said. Whatever the particulars turn out to be, they can only mean more bad news for Indiana drivers. With no increase in state gas taxes since 2003, the state has failed even to keep up with minimal road-maintenance efforts. Even without dangerous and inconvenient failures like this summer's closing of I-65 between West Lafayette and Indianapolis, Indiana's poor roads are costing each motorist \$391 a year in repairs, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers' 2013 Report Card for America's Infrastructure. [Road more traveled | Editorials | www.journalgazette.net](#)

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