

# Progress In Motion

Transportation For A Strong Minnesota



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Tuesday, March 6, 2018

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## **Diverse Capitol Coalition Seeks to Dedicate Road & Bridge Investment**

*Buoyed by 76% support in recent poll, business, labor, agriculture and other capitol powerhouses call on Legislature to dedicate the “full take” of auto-related sales taxes to infrastructure.*

Just ahead of Transportation Day at the Capitol, which is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup>, a strong coalition of business, labor, transportation advocates, agriculture and local government officials called upon the 2018 Legislature to ensure that the “full take” – 100 percent -- of the sales tax on auto parts is dedicated to roads and bridges – constitutionally.

“We don’t take constitutional amendments lightly,” said Vance Stuehrenberg, Blue Earth County Commissioner. But, dedicating motor vehicle fees to road and bridge projects just makes sense. It will ensure that road money is used for roads and bridges,” He concluded.

If voters agree with the measure, the funds generated by the current sales tax would go directly into the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund and would be distributed to MnDOT, counties, cities and townships throughout the state to address critical road and bridge needs.

“This is a big deal. We’re talking about adding nearly \$300 million per year – and growing – to finally tackle some of the toughest and longest-standing road needs in our state, including Highways 14, 23, 212, 12, and Interstates 494 and 35, in addition to other Corridors of Commerce priorities.” Said Tim Worke, CEO of Associated General Contractors of Minnesota.

Public interest is on the side of the transportation advocates, as measured by poll data. A recent survey by Public Opinion Strategies commissioned by Progress in Motion concludes that 76% of Minnesotans, including over 80% of Republicans, and over 70% of Democrats and Independents, would vote for this amendment to protect highway dollars if given the chance.

“The vast majority of poll respondents, and Minnesotans, are ready to put road money in a ‘lockbox’ and want the Legislature to give them the chance to vote on this issue” said Margaret Donahoe,

Executive Director of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance. This will ensure that the money cannot be diverted to other purposes in the future.”

Dan Smith, President and CEO of Cooperative Network agreed.

“Additional dedicated investments in transportation infrastructure to repair deficient bridges, adequately fund Corridors of Commerce, and build and maintain a network of ten-ton roads is critical to support Minnesota’s agriculture industry from farm to marketplace.” Smith said.

The groups, which have worked together in the past to secure and stabilize funding on certain terms – was partially successful in 2017, when the Legislature and Gov. Dayton came together for the largest increase in transportation funds in nearly a decade.

With last week’s news of the over \$300M budget surplus forecast, the funds could be dedicated without harming other general fund programs, said Donahoe.

“Transportation is almost always a top priority for candidates for office. It’s not often that Legislators get the chance to forward an amendment to the voters with over 75% support – and solve a major problem for Minnesota without raising taxes or reducing any other budgets for important state programs.” We’re looking forward to hearing from legislative leaders at our Transportation Day at the Capitol event regarding their views on how to address critical transportation needs and their commitment to increasing and dedicating funds to build the future transportation system our state needs,” she concluded.

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Progress In Motion advocates for all modes of transportation all across the State of Minnesota. Our goal is the development of a safe and effective transportation system. We advocate for transportation infrastructure and services in Greater Minnesota as well as the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and for highways and bridges, transit, ports and waterways and other modes. Our coalition is the largest and most diverse transportation organization that includes businesses, labor, local governments and advocates who rely on the transportation system to ship products, get to work, school and other important destinations and live their lives independently.



# MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES  
 FROM: ROBERT BLIZZARD – PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES  
 DATE: JANUARY 31, 2018  
 RE: MINNESOTA STATEWIDE POLL RESULTS

*On behalf of Progress in Motion, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a statewide survey of 500 registered voters (moe ± 4.4%), January 19-22, 2018. Fully 40% of interviews were conducted via cell phone.*

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Fully three-quarters of Minnesotans support a Constitutional Amendment to dedicate all of the money collected from the sales tax on auto parts to go toward improving the state's roads, bridges and highways.**

By a 76%-19% margin, Minnesota voters say they'd vote YES in favor of a Constitutional Amendment to dedicate all the money collected from the sales tax on auto parts to go toward improving the state's roads, bridges and highways. Support for this potential Amendment extends across every key demographic and geographic group in Minnesota:

	Yes, In Favor	No, Against
<b>Overall</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Republicans	82%	12%
Independents	73%	23%
Democrats	76%	18%
Trump Approvers	80%	16%
Trump Disapprovers	73%	21%
Men 18-54	70%	28%
Men 55+	80%	15%
Women 18-54	74%	20%
Women 55+	80%	13%
Inside Twin Cities Metro Area	72%	21%
Outside Twin Cities Metro Area	82%	15%

- **Importantly, State Legislators in St. Paul will get no push-back from voters, and can be helped politically, by supporting this Amendment.**

If voters learn their Legislator supported this Amendment to dedicate all the money collected through the sales tax on auto parts to the Highway Trust Fund, fully 35% say they'd be more likely to vote to re-elect them, with just 7% of voters saying they'd be less likely. And, most Minnesotans (56%) say it would make no difference to them.



# Diverse Groups Support Dedication of Road Funds for Roads & Bridges

Minnesotans depend upon a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation network to support the movement of people and commerce, the work of our first responders, and the continued growth and vibrancy of our state and local communities.

In 2017, the Legislature and Governor passed the largest investment in our state's transportation infrastructure in roughly a decade. The 2017 bill will generate an additional \$2 Billion in funding for the state's transportation system over the next 10 years. It does this by broadening transportation's base of financial support to include roughly 50% (\$145 million) of the annual revenue generated from the statewide sales tax on auto parts.

The importance of the 2017 funding bill can't be overstated. The Legislature and Governor marked an important milestone in the ongoing effort to fund our state's important transportation infrastructure needs. They provided new, significant, and desperately needed funding for our system. But the work isn't done.

Because the 2017 bill capped the use of the auto parts sales tax revenues at \$145 million per year, this important funding source won't grow over time to help offset ever-increasing construction costs. Additionally, it means roughly \$150 million a year in transportation related sales tax revenues can't be accessed to help fund the completion of critical projects across the state each year.

In 2018, we have an opportunity to build on the accomplishments of 2017 Session. The 2018 Legislature should give Minnesotans the chance to ensure that highway dollars are used for highway purposes by constitutionally dedicating all of the sales tax on auto parts to Minnesota's roads and bridges. Doing so will mean another \$150 million per year for our roads and bridges.

Dedicating these funds would make it far more likely that we can help Greater Minnesota by building a network of ten-ton roads that connect with the trunk highway system, adequately fund the Corridors of Commerce program, and fix deficient bridges.

By capturing the "full take," the Legislature would prioritize a mere 0.6% of the state's budget for transportation infrastructure, a move supported by a strong majority of voters. Recent polling shows that fully 76% of Minnesotans, including over 80% of Republicans, and over 70% of Democrats and Independents, would vote for the amendment to dedicate these funds – constitutionally – to roads and bridges.

Our organizations agree. We stand ready to support the Legislature in taking the logical next steps toward securing the safe, efficient, and reliable transportation network that supports the entire state by asking Minnesotans to constitutionally dedicate these funds to transportation infrastructure. And we will encourage Minnesotans to follow through by voting YES in November.



Laborers' International Union of North America

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