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*Statement from Deb Nemeth, Executive Director, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, regarding the State Highway Program audit released today by the Legislative Audit Bureau:*

“Today’s recommendations by the Legislative Audit Bureau are a good start toward delivering a cost effective transportation program in Wisconsin. These findings show that Wisconsinites were not being provided with accurate information on the true cost of major highway programs.

A clear distinction must be made between dollars designated for highway maintenance and dollars designated for highway expansion, which the LAB found was not always the case. The audit also points out the need for more consistency in how WisDOT selects and prioritizes projects for funding.

It is also clear from the audit that WisDOT has not adequately been taking into account public input while deciding to proceed with major highway construction. We agree with the recommendation that WisDOT should develop a broader range of options for highway projects so that decision makers have more flexibility in choosing an alternative that is right for the budget and their communities.

The recommendations of the LAB provide an opportunity for lawmakers to re-examine the state’s transportation priorities which have increasingly focused on the state’s highway program at the expense of local road repair and investment in public transit. “

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