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Coalition for More Responsible Transportation Responds to State Transportation Budget

Yesterday, after months of debate, the Joint Finance Committee passed its 2017-19 transportation budget. The agreement includes significant increases to local road aids and does not enumerate the billion-dollar expansion of I-94's East-West Corridor between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges in Milwaukee. Leaders of the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT) issued the following statements in response:

"State leaders deserve credit for prioritizing maintenance of existing infrastructure and not giving the green light to the billion-dollar I-94 East-West expansion project," said **Peter Skopec, WISPIRG Director**. "While this budget is a step in the right direction, missing from this agreement are investments in public transit, walking and biking options that connect a growing number of seniors, young people, and Wisconsinites with disabilities to the places they want to go."

"Our coalition has long urged decision-makers to treat the state's infrastructure crisis not simply as one caused by declining transportation revenue, but also as a problem of misplaced spending priorities," said **Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator with the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter**. "It's encouraging to see state leaders strike the I-94 East-West expansion from their budget proposal and to focus instead on more important needs at the local level."

"This is a good first step towards shifting Wisconsin's priorities to the maintenance and operation of our infrastructure and away from unnecessary highway expansion," said **Ashwat Narayanan, Transportation Policy Director with 1000 Friends of Wisconsin**. "We commend the increase in funding for local road and bridge repair. However, the state must also invest in modern, 21st century transportation infrastructure to remain economically competitive and provide access to opportunity for everyone in the state."

The Coalition for More Responsible Transportation is composed of public interest, environmental, public health, faith-based and transportation advocacy groups, including the Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG), the WISDOM interfaith network, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin and the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter.

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