



Legislative Report

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Safe Roads Amendment needs support

On August 26, 2016, the TOI Board of Directors voted unanimously to support passage of the “Safe Roads Amendment,” which will be proposed as a change to the Illinois Constitution and offered as a question on the November 8 ballot. Passage of this amendment can greatly benefit township, as well as other local and state road construction and maintenance programs immensely throughout the state of Illinois.

THE SAFE ROADS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT provides that moneys raised through State or local motor fuel taxes, motor vehicle registration or title fees, and other user taxes, tolls, and fees dedicated to public highways, roads, streets and bridges may only be expended on transportation purposes. In other words, it prohibits the General Assembly or a unit of local government from using, diverting, or transferring moneys raised from these transportation revenue sources for non-transportation purposes.

This prohibition of “raiding” funds, such as the Motor Fuel Tax Fund, has implications for townships and other local governments who rely greatly on these state dollars to fund our road programs.

Why the need?

Over the last 10 years alone, \$6 billion has been swept from Illinois’ Road Fund because of waste and mismanagement in Springfield. Much of that money would have found its way to townships, which desperately need the dollars for simple road maintenance, plowing and upkeep. At the same time, over 4,200 Illinois bridges and half of Illinois roads are in poor condition. That puts Illinois families in danger of bridge collapses like those we saw in Minnesota and Indiana. Aging infrastructure puts a strain on the economy and makes it difficult for the state to attract business.

Passage of the Safe Roads Amendment will not solve all of Illinois’ transportation needs, but it

The exact wording of the question regarding the Safe Roads Amendment:

“The proposed amendment adds a new section to the Revenue Article of the Illinois Constitution. The proposed amendment provides that no moneys derived from taxes, fees, excises, or license taxes, relating to registration, titles, operation, or use of vehicles or public highways, roads, streets, bridges, mass transit, intercity passenger rail, ports, or airports, or motor fuels, including bond proceeds, shall be expended for other than costs of administering laws related to vehicles and transportation, costs for construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, and betterment of public highways, roads, streets, bridges, mass transit, intercity passenger rail, ports, airports, or other forms of transportation, and other statutory highway purposes, including the State or local share to match federal aid highway funds.”

will go a long way in restoring tax dollars to the purpose for which they were levied, provide desperately needed funds to state and local roads, and help restore taxpayers’ confidence in a shaky state budgeting process.

We at TOI urge you to get out and support—and tell your neighbors to support—the Safe Roads Amendment. It will be the first question, even before the Presidential choice, on your ballot.



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