



Please Oppose SB 272 – ‘Trans II’ bonding

SB 272 will degrade Colorado’s existing roads and bridges; puts federal funds at risk; and does not reflect Coloradans’ funding priorities for transportation

SB 272 dramatically cuts funds available for maintaining existing roads and bridges
SB 272 takes \$220 million/year out of CDOT’s budget for twenty years to pay off \$3.5 billion in bonds for new construction. This is \$4.4 billion that was originally slated for maintaining roads and bridges that will now be spent elsewhere.

Right now, CDOT is using about \$165 million/year from Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP) Funds for “asset management” – that is, maintaining roads and bridges. Despite this, pavement quality statewide is rated B- and is declining 1-2% per year.¹ These critical RAMP funds will expire in 2017, CDOT is planning to use the \$167 million/year that would be freed up by the payoff of the Trans Bonds starting in FY 18 to replace this funding stream and continue our commitment to fixing our roads.

The proposal also calls for assuring five years of SB 228 transfers of approximately \$200 million /year from the general fund to transportation. This does not fix the maintenance shortfall – the bill would generate only \$1 billion, while taking away over \$4 billion of maintenance funds. The bill would dramatically cut available funding.

Colorado’s first priority is maintenance

In surveys of Colorado residents, their top priority for our states transportation system is to maintain existing highways and bridges – with 39% of respondents ranking this first, compared to only 14% of respondents ranking reducing congestion as the top priority². Yet this proposal would dramatically cut funds for maintenance and shift them to new construction.

SB 272 adds new lane miles without adding money to maintain them

To make matters worse, because this proposal would add significant new lane miles to the system, it increases the need for dollars to maintain the system, as there will be more system to maintain. While some of the proposed new lane miles are managed lanes, which may generate enough toll revenue for their own maintenance, others are general-purpose lanes or new interchanges requiring maintenance. There has been no analysis performed of the net addition in required funds for asset management.

¹ Source: CDOT’s Risk-Based Asset Management Plan, http://coloradotransportationmatters.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/CDOT_RBAMP.pdf

² Summer 2011 CDOT resident survey, conducted by Corona Insights for CDOT

Trans II threatens Colorado's federal funding

Federal transportation law (MAP 21) requires that states develop and implement an asset management plan that meets federal criteria. Colorado has developed a plan that meets federal requirements. Cutting \$220 million per year out of asset management will threaten the ability to implement the plan. Failure to implement the plan can lead to a loss of 35% of Colorado's federal transportation funding. Since Colorado receives approximately \$570 million of federal transportation funding, this could threaten a loss of \$200 million per year.

Colorado residents want new investment to focus on safer routes and public transit

Local elected leaders from around the state organized as MPACT 64, spent much of 2012 and 2013 exploring a potential state transportation funding ballot issue. They conducted polling in 2014. The poll showed that across the state, citizens want to invest in maintenance but when it comes to new investments they most favor spending funds for safe routes for children to walk and bike to school. Coloradans have also said they want to see investment in expanding both bus and rail based public transit, followed by safer bike and pedestrian infrastructure, shoulders on rural roads to increase safety, and local road improvements.³ Expanding state highways ranked as the very lowest priority of respondents.

Trans II overwhelmingly focuses on highway expansion

The proposal dedicates 90% of the funding to expanding highways, leaving only 10% for public transit, and dedicates no funding to bike or pedestrian safety – and pays for this by cutting maintenance. This is the exact opposite of the priorities of Colorado's voters, as demonstrated in multiple surveys.

Trans II harms education, health care, and other priorities

As written, Trans II extends SB 228 transfers from the general fund to CDOT without fixing any of the problems created by TABOR. This harms other high priorities. Colorado needs a comprehensive fiscal fix that addresses transportation needs alongside other priorities, not at their expense.

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³ Colorado Transportation Coalition Survey, January, 2014