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**Advocate for the Heavy Construction Industry**

May 19, 2015

**SOLVING THE CRISIS IN CALIFORNIA’S CRUMBLING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM:  
THE VOTERS UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WILL TAKE**

The collective failure among California’s elected officials, policy makers and transportation stakeholders to adequately address our crumbling streets, roads and highways at both the local and state level has carried us over a transportation fiscal cliff – a cliff we have already fallen from but have yet to experience the hard landing that is rushing up to meet us.

The unmet needs in addressing the condition of our deteriorating network of roads is staggering:

- California has the second-highest share of roads in “poor condition” in the nation.
- Some 58% of state roads need rehabilitation or pavement maintenance.
- Our state has 6 of the 10 cities with the worst road conditions in the nation.
- 55 percent of local bridges require rehabilitation or replacement.
- Nearly 70% of California’s urban roads and highways are congested.
- Without additional funding, a fourth of local streets and roads will be in failed condition by 2024.

Faced with this challenge, the California Alliance for Jobs has completed what is likely the most comprehensive project any organization has undertaken in many years to assess the attitudes and priorities California voters currently place on preserving and improving the state’s network of streets, roads and highways. We believe the research can help inform transportation funding proposals that are currently being considered in the Legislature.

**Scope of Research**

We commissioned six focus groups with Discovery Data, Inc. of likely voters throughout California from January through March 2015: (Sacramento, Contra Costa County, Santa Clara County, Los Angeles, San Diego, Merced County). The findings of these focus groups were then incorporated into a poll of likely voters that was conducted by Moore Methods over a period of three weeks in April.

A more detailed PowerPoint presentation including video clips of the focus groups can be accessed at:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/dsi64px3o1jng0k/%20Focus%20Group%20Findings\\_CTIP.pptx?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/dsi64px3o1jng0k/%20Focus%20Group%20Findings_CTIP.pptx?dl=0)

A summary of the focus group findings and a copy of the topline poll results are attached.

## Key Findings

- We found the polling results to be completely consistent with the findings in our focus groups.
- Voters are acutely aware that our roads are deteriorating. They don't have to be prompted or have messages spun at them about the need. They already get it and are ready to do something to solve the problem.
- Voters place the highest priority on making bridges and overpasses safer, improving traffic congestion bottlenecks and maintaining existing state and local roads. Expanding regional commuter rail and bus services ranked lowest in priority among voters.
- Voters are lukewarm to increasing any single source of revenue to fix our roads, but when presented with a blended package **containing those same elements**, initial support actually increases to 55%.
- When substantive accountability provisions are added, support increases to 68%. This is a critical finding in our polling. Voters are inherently distrustful of raising taxes and fees, because they don't trust government to spend the money effectively and responsibly. Adding real accountability provisions to the funding increases voter confidence and support.
- Although current legislative proposals have thus far focused on a 5-year sunset, we tested a 10-year sunset; the reason being that a number of our focus group respondents questioned whether a 5-year program would really get the job done. As the poll results demonstrate, the longer sunset does not erode voter support.

## Our Recommendations

The funding recommendations outlined below are premised on the following:

1. A funding package comprised of modest increases among a variety of existing sources increases fairness, insures that all users of state and local roads help pay for their upkeep, and reflects voter priorities.
2. Phasing in some funding increases reduces financial impact, however ...
3. Phasing in also reduces ability to reach target funding levels needed to address road maintenance and rehabilitation needs, unless a longer (10-year) sunset is adopted.

## Performance & Accountability

Although additional transportation funding is critical to help address California's deteriorating transportation infrastructure, funding without clear performance standards and accountability provisions will undermine effective implementation and voter confidence. The elements outlined below should be inseparably connected with a transportation funding package:

- New funding sources need to be placed into accounts dedicated to their intended purposes and protected from being used for budget shortfalls or programs unrelated to transportation.
- California Transportation Commission (CTC) oversight of Caltrans use of SHOPP funds should be strengthened.
- Require that the CTC identify estimated funds to be available for the program and adopt performance criteria to ensure efficient use of the funds.
- Authorize CTC, in collaboration with CalSTA and Caltrans, to adopt a plan to increase Caltrans efficiency and direct savings into SHOPP and maintenance projects.
- Require CTC to adopt similar performance and accountability process for that portion of funding to be allocated to maintenance and preservation of local streets and roads.

## **California Alliance for Jobs Role in Infrastructure Investment**

The California Alliance for Jobs is a labor-management partnership representing more than 2,000 contractors and 80,000 union construction workers in Northern and Central California. Over the past 15 years, it has played a leadership role in helping counties and regional transportation agencies within its jurisdiction secure more than \$20 billion in transportation sales tax and toll funding measures.

At the statewide level, the Alliance co-chaired the successful Prop. 1A-1E campaign in 2006 with Senate pro Tem Don Perata, which secured voter approval for \$37 billion in bonds to finance transportation, housing, school and flood control infrastructure improvements throughout the state.

The Alliance also chaired Prop. 1A in 2008, the High Speed Rail bond measure and co-chaired Prop. 22 in 2010 with the League of California Cities and the California Transit Assoc., which placed strong protections on existing transportation funding sources.

Executive Consultant Jim Earp was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2007 to the California Transportation Commission and reappointed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2011 and 2015.

Jim Earp  
Executive Consultant  
California Alliance for Jobs

# **California Transportation Funding Survey**

**April 29, 2015**

## **Survey Findings:**

- 1. Voters see quality of roads deteriorating.**
- 2. Deterioration of roads and highways ranks higher among their concerns than in recent years..**
- 3. Maintaining existing system, addressing traffic bottlenecks and fixing unsafe roads and bridges rank highest among voters' transportation priorities.**

## Survey Findings:

4. Voters are lukewarm about any single source of revenue to fix the problem, but when presented with a blended package containing those same elements, initial support is significantly stronger.
5. Adding accountability provisions increases support further and helps reassure voters the funds will be spent responsibly.

## 1. Road maintenance and pothole repair are increasingly important.

2. Is the issue of \_\_\_(a)\_\_\_ very, somewhat or not too important to you ?

	VERY	SOME WHAT	NOT TOO	NO OPIN	
* improving the state economy. ....	84	13	3	0	
* drought relief and increasing water supplies. ....	83	13	4	0	
* improving public education. ....	78	15	7	0	
* improving public safety and preventing crime. ....	76	19	5	0	
* making university tuition more affordable. ....	63	25	11	1	
* <u>maintaining roads and filling potholes. ....</u>	61	32	7	0	- 2015
	56	36	8	0	- 2013
	54	39	7	0	- 2011
* simplifying government regulations. ....	52	29	12	7	
* keeping state and local taxes at current levels. ....	51	32	12	5	
* providing more affordable housing. ....	49	30	20	1	

## 2. Road safety fixes and fixing potholes and bottlenecks are voters' highest priorities.

4. Would you give a high, medium or low priority to \_\_\_(a)\_\_\_?

	HIGH	MED	LOW	NO OPIN
* <u>improving traffic congestion bottlenecks</u> . . . . .	63	31	6	0
* <u>making bridge safety improvements</u> . . . . .	63	28	8	1
* <u>filling potholes and maintaining roads</u> . . . . .	61	32	7	0
* <u>maintaining state highways</u> . . . . .	60	36	3	1
* <u>making road safety improvements</u> . . . . .	56	32	9	3
* <u>widening highways to help reduce congestion</u> . . . . .	43	39	17	1
* <u>expanding local bus services</u> . . . . .	38	37	22	3
* <u>expanding regional commuter rail service</u> . . . . .	38	34	26	2

## 3. Voters see quality of roads deteriorating.

3. How would you rate, the quality of \_\_\_(a)\_\_\_ in your area - excellent, good, fair or poor ?

	EXCE/ GOOD	FAIR/ POOR	NO OPIN	
* <u>local streets and roads</u> . . . . .	42	58	0	- 2015
	52	48	0	- 2013
	50	49	1	- 2011
* <u>state highways</u> . . . . .	52	45	3	- 2015
	55	45	0	- 2013
	56	44	0	- 2011

## 4. Voters lukewarm about any single source of revenue to fix the problem...

5a. To fund this plan, would you support or oppose \_\_\_(a)\_\_\_ ?

	SUPP	OPPS	NO OPIN
* increasing the state <u>gas tax by 2 cents a gallon</u> , each year for 5 years, totalling 10 cents a gallon after 5 years. ....	42	57	1
* increasing <u>vehicle registration fees</u> by a total of \$35, phased in by <u>\$7 a year over 5 years</u> . ....	46	53	1
* increasing <u>vehicle license fees</u> by a total of <u>one-half of one percent</u> of a vehicle's value, phased in over a 5 year period. ....	51	46	3
* dedicating current <u>truck weight fees</u> paid by large trucks, to be used <u>for road repair purposes only</u> . ...	72	19	9

## 5. ... but when presented with a blended package containing those same elements, initial support is significantly stronger.

5b. Those are the possible sources for funding a 10 year plan to rehabilitate and repair state bridges, highways, and local streets and roads.

Would you likely support or oppose this funding proposal ?

	TOTAL	PARTY			REGION		AGE		
		DEMS	REPB	OTHR	SO. CAL.	NO. CAL.	<40	40- 59	60+
SUPPORT	57	68	35	66	57	58	59	57	56
OPPOSE	37	27	56	29	34	39	37	39	35
NO OPINION	6	5	9	5	9	3	4	4	9

## 6. Adding accountability provisions increases support and helps reassure voters.

6a. Would you support or oppose adding a provision to \_\_\_(a)\_\_\_ ?

	SUPP	OPPS	NO OPIN
* <u>place all revenues in a Road Rehabilitation fund and require 95% be spent on road projects and CalTrans administrative expenses limited to 5%.</u> . . . . .	74	22	4
* <u>limit this plan to 10 years and require voter approval for an additional 10 year extension.</u> . . . . .	67	30	3
* <u>require that future Caltrans administrative budgets be reduced by thirty percent with all savings spent on road projects.</u> . . . . .	69	22	9
* <u>allow local governments to use a portion of funds to finance bonds to quickly make safety improvements which engineers say are safety hazards.</u> . . . . .	67	28	5

## 6. Adding accountability provisions increases support and helps reassure voters.

6b. If those provisions were added, would you likely support or oppose a 10-year funding plan to rehabilitate and repair state bridges, highways and local streets and roads ?

	TOTAL	PARTY			REGION		AGE		
		DEMS	REPB	OTHR	SO.	NO.	40-		
					CAL.	CAL.	<40	50	60+
SUPPORT	66	73	49	76	67	64	68	68	63
OPPOSE	31	25	46	22	28	33	32	30	31
NO OPINION	3	2	6	2	4	2	0	2	6