

editor's note



SOME THINGS ARE EASY TO AGREE ON. Ice cream tastes great. Sitting by the lake is wonderfully relaxing. Watching your kids play soccer is exciting.

And some things are easy to argue about. Politics and religion. Yankees vs. Mets. Star Wars or Star Trek.

But seriously, folks, why are we continuously fretting over transportation funding? Is there really anyone out there who doesn't think we need to keep our roads, bridges and rail lines in good repair? (Well, anyone outside of Congress?)

Why do I get emails from the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) warning that highway work is about to creep to a snail's pace because the U.S. Department of Transportation is about to slow reimbursements to state highway departments? And why are they warning that if no revenue action is taken by October 1, there'll be no federal funding for any new highway or transit projects in any state during 2015? This means that, on average, state DOTs will lose 52% of their budget for these capital projects.

According to Lital Shair, a market research associate with ARTBA, "Uncertainty surrounding the future of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) continues to have ripple effects on state transportation planning. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on June 26 became the 23rd state to express uncertainty about the future of major projects if Congress does not stabilize highway funding before the current surface transportation bill expires October 1."

Arkansas has already halted work on 10 projects totaling \$60 million. Louisiana has a backlog of \$12 billion for necessary maintenance and modernization of the state's roads, bridges and highways. Texas has a \$16 billion gap in funding the repair and modernization of its transportation infrastructure. Massachusetts needs an additional \$1 billion annually. The list goes on and on. According to former President Bill Clinton, U.S. public infrastructure spending, as a percentage of GDP, stands at 1.7%—a 20-year low.

I urge you to contact your representatives and demand action on highway transportation funding. You can visit www.aisc.org/action and send a note to your congressperson or senator. Or better yet, visit their local office. Sit down with them and ask why this isn't their priority. Let's get transportation funding rolling.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Melnick".

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