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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Lawmakers introduce fix for Michigan's transportation funding crisis**

State Reps. Dick Ball, R-Bennington Township, and Pam Byrnes, D-Lyndon Township, today introduced bills to help resolve Michigan's transportation funding crisis by increasing revenues dedicated to transportation.

"Michigan's transportation infrastructure is at a critical juncture," Ball said. "These increases will allow our state, counties and cities to make the critical repairs our roads and bridges need, while also ensuring we can put forth the matching funds necessary for federal dollars."

The bills would address Michigan's looming transportation funding shortfall - an estimated \$3 billion annually - by initially raising \$240 million a year, and when fully implemented in 2013, raising \$480 million a year thereafter.

"The poor quality of Michigan roads and bridges has already passed the crisis stage," said Byrnes, chair of the House Transportation Committee. "This is neither a Republican nor Democrat issue. This is a Michigan issue - an issue of doing what's right for Michigan drivers, businesses and taxpayers."

The package of bills follows the recommendations by the Transportation Funding Task Force (TF2) to address Michigan's funding needs. From 2011 - 2014, the funding plan could provide enough revenue to complete any of the following projects:

- Reconstruct 2,275 freeway lane miles;
- Rehabilitate 9,450 freeway lane miles;
- Reconstruct 2,800 bridges; and
- Reconstruct 4,900 intersections.

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The bills also call for revenues generated by the increase to be directly deposited into a protected Transportation Investment Fund, which creates a lock box that doesn't allow for diversions of gas tax money to other areas of the state budget. Ten percent of the tax increase funds would be dedicated to the Comprehensive Transportation Fund, with all remaining revenue going to a newly formed Transportation Investment Fund, part of the Michigan Transportation Fund, and distributed as follows:

- State Trunkline Fund: 39.1 percent
- County Road Commissions: 39.1 percent
- Cities and Villages: 21.8 percent

In addition to providing enough funds to meet the federal match, this legislation would create a five-member Fuel Tax Restructuring Commission. The commission would be charged with studying and recommending long-term replacements for the current cents-per-gallon motor fuel taxes. The group will also examine methods of alternative technology that may be applied to the tax restructuring.

The increases would be phased in, starting on March 1, when the state gasoline tax would go up by .04 cents per gallon (.19 to .23) and the diesel tax would rise .06 cents per gallon (.15 to .21). Then on Jan. 1, 2013, the state gasoline tax would go up .04 cents per gallon (.23 to .27) and the diesel tax would increase by .06 cents per gallon (.21 to .27).

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