

DATE

TO THE EDITOR:

As we're all navigating the winter driving season, you might be surprised to learn that of the 140,000 miles of roadways in Minnesota, 130,000 are under the jurisdiction of counties, cities and townships – not MnDOT. That means that local governments have a huge responsibility when it comes to maintaining and repairing the roads and bridges that we all rely on every day.

Most of the funding for our roads comes from dedicated user fees collected by the state like the gas tax, tab fees and motor vehicle sales tax. Unfortunately, those user fees have taken a hit in the last couple of years as people have worked more from home and it's been difficult to find affordable cars to purchase. To make things worse inflation rates have skyrocketed in the last few years making construction and simple maintenance of our roads and bridges much more expensive. Without adequate state collected revenue, local property taxes can wind up filling that gap or needed roadway repair just doesn't get done in a timely manner.

Counties and cities are expecting to receive less funding from state user fees in 2023 than they received in 2022. That cut in state funding for our county/city amounts to \$_____. The impact of this cut in funding will be _____.

At the same time, the state is projecting a surplus of over \$17 billion in the state general fund, and about \$12 billion of that represents a one-time funding increase. It makes sense to spend one-time funding on one-time projects like road and bridge fixes. The legislature should spend some of the surplus dollars to increase our county/city state aid for roads in the short-term while also enacting a longer-term solution with increases in ongoing, dedicated user fees for our transportation system. At the very least, the state should be spending all of the revenue it collects from the existing sales tax on auto repair parts on transportation.

There are lots of ideas for how to spend the state surplus. We can all agree that fixing the transportation system we need to move products and people and live our everyday lives should be a top priority. The legislature has an important opportunity to make our roads and bridges safer while improving mobility and supporting the economy. We need our legislators to make our transportation system a priority during the 2023 Session.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP