



Dear Legislator:

Mississippi is at a crossroads when it comes to preserving our transportation system.

The choice is simple. Make the necessary commitment to protect the investment made in our infrastructure, or allow the system to continue to deteriorate.

Comprehensive, independent research, conducted by the University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State University and Cambridge Systematics Inc. outlines the problems in detail, and provides real, common-sense solutions for Mississippi to address this vital issue.

This research, paid for entirely through private-sector contributions, was overseen by the Mississippi Economic Council's Blueprint Mississippi Transportation Infrastructure Task Force, made up of business leaders from across Mississippi. This research provides an independent voice in outlining, with certainty, the problem and how it can be addressed.

The Task Force determined a minimum of \$375 million annually is needed to deal with Mississippi's most pressing needs, and ensure a safe and reliable transportation system.

In making its recommendation, the Task Force provided a list of options for funding and outlined what the "Excelerate Mississippi" initiative would accomplish. Research also shows the creation of thousands of jobs – 4,000 in the construction industry and an additional 7,000 annually in all sectors of the economy.

The research is clear – additional revenue must be targeted to address these needs. The reason is clear – the cost of maintenance is far outpacing current revenue. Experience clearly tells us the legislature is best suited to determine the best sources for coming up with either additional funds and/or allocating resources.

The last time annual funding for transportation increased was in 1987, when the legislature created the AHEAD four-lane highway program. Since then, the overall use of the system has grown tremendously, while the revenue to maintain the system has changed very little:

- Revenue from the fuel excise tax has increased only 1.6 percent.
- The number of registered vehicles in Mississippi is up 17 percent.
- The total miles traveled in Mississippi are up 90 percent.

At the same time, the cost of maintaining the system has increased enormously:

- Inflation has risen 108 percent since 1987.
- The cost of construction is up 217 percent since 1987.

Meanwhile, Blueprint research shows the Mississippi Department of Transportation is working to do more with less. Since 2008 administrative costs at MDOT declined by 1.5 percent, while building and

equipment costs dropped by almost 3 percent, even though inflation during this period rose more than 9 percent.

The latest national research by The Reason Foundation shows MDOT's approach has improved from 16th in 2010 to 8th in the most recent rankings comparing overall system performance with the resources available. But Mississippi continues to face challenges as the study ranks Mississippi 30th in rural interstate pavement conditions and 21st in deficient bridges.

A recent report from the legislature's Joint Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) shows "MDOT's priorities and funding have shifted away from new capacity projects to system preservation projects." But in every region of the state citizens, community leaders and economic developers are demanding additional highway capacity. With additional funding, sidelined projects can get back on track.

Failure to address appropriate highway funding will have major consequences:

- The cost of road and bridge repair will continue to rise. Preventative maintenance is four times less expensive than major repairs.
- The cost to consumers will also be greater. Instead of paying 37 cents a day per registered vehicle to fund the "Excelerate Mississippi" program, Taxpayers will face an increase of \$1.75 a day in additional vehicle operating costs.
- There will be lost opportunities for business growth and lost opportunities for Mississippians who could've had good paying and productive careers.
- The safety of our citizens will also be compromised. School buses already face detours. Firefighters also face longer alternative routes. These problems will continue to get worse.

Mississippians understand this issue is real. Scientific polling of 1,000 voters in every part of the state shows 53 percent support a reasonable plan for increasing taxes or fees, provided new funding is spent only on roads and bridges.

"Excelerate Mississippi" outlines a program for catching up on fixing our crumbling roads and bridges, while at the same time building new capacity to keep our economic development engine running. The result will be safer roads...stronger bridges...a growing economy...and more opportunities for our people.

Thank you for your consideration,



Joe F. Sanderson, Jr.,

Chair Blueprint Mississippi Transportation Infrastructure Task Force, Jones County

Bill Jones, Adams County
Aaron Shermer, Adams County
Anne Rushing, Alcorn County
Sam Tull, Alcorn County
T. Martin Williams, Alcorn County
Wanda Gatlin, Amite County

Hollis Cheek, Attala County
Sarah Walker, Benton County
J Paul Janoush, Bolivar County
Suzette Matthews, Bolivar County
Judson Thigpen, III, Bolivar County
Jerry Nix, Calhoun County

Bobby Steele, Calhoun County
 Mary Ann Stinson, Carroll County
 Hassell H. Franklin, Chickasaw County
 Elizabeth A. Harrison, PhD, Chickasaw County
 Donna McKay, Choctaw County
 Michael Thomas, Choctaw County
 Robert Gage, Claiborne County
 Pepper Beckman, Clarke County
 Lisa Klutts, Clay County
 Ron Hudson, Coahoma County
 Arthur L. Evans, Jr., Copiah County
 Bill Blain, Covington County
 Buddy Wolverton, Covington County
 Jeff Field, DeSoto County
 Charles Gordon, Desoto County
 Lee Talbot, Desoto County
 Jim Compton, Forrest County
 Karl Ficken, Forrest County
 Mike Kuykendall, Forrest County
 Brandon Smith, Forrest County
 Benjamin M. Stevens, III, Forrest County
 Robert Tatum, Forrest County
 Lawrence Warren, Forrest County
 Randall West, Forrest County
 Brad Jones, Franklin County
 Mike Smith, George County
 Paul L. Walters, Greene County
 Joe Lee, Grenada County
 Harry Lott, Jr., Grenada County
 Mary Kay Hubbard, Hancock County
 Johnny Atherton, Harrison County
 Paul J. Bertucci, Harrison County
 Padrick Dennis, Harrison County
 Dave Dennis, Harrison County
 Bill Hessell, Harrison County
 Rex E. Kelly, Harrison County
 Chuck Ladner, Harrison County
 Joel Moody, Harrison County
 Erin Moody, Harrison County
 Mark Patton, Harrison County
 George Schloegel, Harrison County
 Steven Warren, Harrison County
 Anthony Wilson, Harrison County
 William G. Yates, III, Harrison County
 Martha Cooke, Hinds County
 Billy Deviney, Hinds County
 Haley Fisackerly, Hinds County

Mayo Flynt, Hinds County
 Gerad Hardy, Hinds County
 Mark Hosemann, Hinds County
 Jerry Host, Hinds County
 Andrea Kilian, Hinds County
 Anthony Kilian, Hinds County
 William W. Lampton, Hinds County
 Doug Levanway, Hinds County
 Michael B. McArthur, Hinds County
 Stephen Paul, Hinds County
 Jon Turner, Hinds County
 Josh Uhinck, Hinds County
 David Watkins, Hinds County
 Gray Wiggers, Hinds County
 Rebecca Lee Wiggs, Hinds County
 Allen Williamson, Hinds County
 Wayne Bowling, Holmes County
 Huey Townsend, Humphreys County
 Kit McCoy, Issaquena County
 Chip Crane, Ittawamba County
 Thomas Kline, Ittawamba County
 Greg Cronin, Jackson County
 Walker Foster, Jackson County
 Fred Osing, Jackson County
 Jamie Holder, Jasper County
 Charles Holder, Jasper County
 Kevin Bonds, Jefferson County
 Grant Dyess, Jefferson Davis County
 Anthony Waits, Jefferson Davis County
 Stan Burton, Jones County
 John Christian, Jones County
 Louis Crumbley, Jones County
 Doug Higginbotham, Jones County
 Chris Wilson, Jones County
 Glynn Pittman, Kemper County
 William Lewis, Jr., Lafayette County
 Allen Anderson, Lamar County
 Tommy Dulaney, Lauderdale County
 Jim McGinnis, Lauderdale County
 C.D. Smith, Lauderdale County
 Charlie Robinson, Lawrence County
 Lee Carson, Leake County
 David Brevard, Lee County
 R.B. Dossett, Jr., Lee County
 Joe Geddie, Lee County
 Jim Goodwin, Lee County
 Robert Haggerty, Lee County

Brent Koslo, Lee County
 Aubrey Patterson, Lee County
 Jack R. Reed, Jr., Lee County
 Tom Robinson, Lee County
 Dan Rollins, Lee County
 David Rumbarger, Lee County
 James Threadgill, Lee County
 Steve Wallace, Lee County
 Bill Crump, Leflore County
 Clint Estess, Lincoln County
 Ryan Holmes, Lincoln County
 Bill Jacobs, Lincoln County
 Craig Rosenthal, Lincoln County
 Bill Sones, Lincoln County
 Nick Ardillo, Lowndes County
 Jimmy Galloway, Lowndes County
 R. Perry Lucas, Lowndes County
 Mark Smith, Lowndes County
 W. Lance Walters, Lowndes County
 Michelle Whittle, Lowndes County
 Bart Wise, Lowndes County
 Phil Buffington, Madison County
 Michael Callahan, Madison County
 Alveno Castilla, Madison County
 Arthur DuCote, Madison County
 David Gates, Madison County
 Matt Holleman, Madison County
 Gloria B. Johnson, Madison County
 Paul J. McKenzie, Madison County
 Carol Pigott, Madison County
 Philip Shirley, Madison County
 W.Thomas Siler, Jr., Madison County
 Ronnie Tubertini, Madison County
 Max Yates, Madison County
 Scott Alan Yetter, Madison County
 Jeff Dungan, Marion County
 Pat R. Woods, Marshall County
 Todd Wilemon, Monroe County
 David Putman, Montgomery County
 Don Kilgore, Neshoba County
 Charles Phillips, Neshoba County
 Eric Prince, Neshoba County
 Leigh Anne Whittle, Newton County
 Kirk Rushing, Noxubee County
 Lewis Mallory, Oktibbeha County
 Jerry Toney, Oktibbeha County
 Sonny Simmons, Panola County

Dr. William Lewis, Pearl River County
 Kimberly Hinton, Perry County
 Ed Dundas, Pike County
 Johnny D. Richard, Pike County
 Jim Sneed, Pontotoc County
 Leon Hays, Prentiss County
 Earl Stone, Prentiss County
 Angie Crawford, Quitman County
 James Bowman, Rankin County
 Thomas Burnham, Rankin County
 Steve Dobbs, Rankin County
 Peter Foley, Rankin County
 Aaron French, Rankin County
 William N. Hodges, Rankin County
 Leigh Knighton, Rankin County
 Melanie A. Morgan, Rankin County
 Charles W. Nicholson, Jr., Rankin County
 Daniel Pantello, Rankin County
 Brad Parker, Rankin County
 Bruce Rea, Rankin County
 Edward Russell, Rankin County
 Monique Uelmen, Rankin County
 Kevin Van de Ven, Rankin County
 Brandon Wynn, Rankin County
 Allen Breland, Scott County
 Andy Anderson, Sharkey County
 Mike Lamensdorf, Sharkey County
 Robert Barnes, Simpson County
 Darrell W. Temple, Smith County
 A. Wynn Alexander, Stone County
 Chris Cain, Stone County
 Tom Gresham, Sunflower County
 Walton Gresham, Sunflower County
 Courtney Phillips, Sunflower County
 J. B. "Randy" Randall, Sunflower County
 Ed Robinson, Sunflower County
 Tim Timbs, Sunflower County
 Ray Rounsaville, Tallahatchie County
 Rob Rowland, Tallahatchie County
 Mike Wagner, Tallahatchie County
 Haywood Wilson, Tallahatchie County
 George P. Cossar, III, Tate County
 Steve Glidewell, Tippah County
 Bobby P. Martin, Tippah County
 Jason Wharton, Tishamingo County
 Webster Franklin, Tunica County
 Phil Nanney, Union County

Jeremy Holmes, Walthall County
Danny Trusty, Walthall County
Hunter L. Fordice, Warren County
Michael Keen, Warren County
Richard Wilkerson, Warren County
Sherri Edwards, Washington County
David Gray, Washington County
Cary Karlson, Washington County
Johnny McRight, Washington County
Stephanie Patton, Washington County
Clarke Reed, Washington County

Charles Tindall, III, Washington County
Joel Clements, Wayne County
Bonita Martin, Webster County
Matt Seawright, Webster
Deborah Randall, Wilkinson County
Tom Rosenblatt, Wilkinson County
Lex Taylor, Winston County
Karen Cummins, Yalobusha County
James Dukes, Yalobusha County
Jimmy Wever, Yazoo County
Phil Williams, Yazoo County

Key business leaders from all 82 Mississippi counties are represented in the signatures above. These 223 leaders voluntarily added their names in support of the Excelerate Mississippi transportation initiative.

For more information: www.exceleratems.com

Contacts: Blake Wilson – 601-940-2877 – bwilson@mec.ms

Scott Waller – 601-540-2970 – swaller@mec.ms

Christi Kilroy – 601-630-5600 – ckilroy@mec.ms