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TOP TEN REASONS TO STOP I-94 EXPANSION IN S.E. WISCONSIN

1000 Friends releases top reasons to oppose plans to expand I-94 from Kenosha to Milwaukee

As the state moves forward on its plans to spend nearly two billion dollars to expand I-94 in southeast Wisconsin, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin has developed a top ten list of reasons to oppose the plan.

“Wisconsin is facing a budget shortfall that will require all state agencies to trim spending plans. The state Department of Transportation should set an example for all agencies by cutting back on wasteful spending. At the same time, the Transportation Department could help reduce the causes of global warming and help build stronger communities,” said Steve Hiniker, Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.

The Top Ten:

1. **It is not needed.** The study promoting the plan ignores numerous studies that demonstrate that adding capacity to highways induces demand. In other words, “build it and they will come.” The study also fails to address that the rate of increase in vehicle miles traveled is slowing – not growing.
2. **We can’t afford it.** The expansion plans will cost 1.9 *billion* dollars. The complete freeway build out plan (the ambitious \$20 billion State Highway 2020 plan) will cost more than \$544 million over what we are spending on roads today. That would require the equivalent of a 16.5 cent gas tax rise to fund it.
3. **It will increase property taxes.** Currently, over 40% (or about \$1.3 billion) of road and highway costs are shouldered by property tax payers. As the state increases spending on highway projects such as the I-94 expansion – without raising gas taxes – more of the costs are shifted to property tax payers.
4. **It will add to the problems of global warming.** 28% of greenhouse gas emissions in Wisconsin are generated by the transportation sector. Even as automobiles get more fuel efficient, increases in total miles driven outpace those savings. We need to reduce miles driven – not encourage more driving.
5. **There is no funding for improving transit in the corridor.** Despite regional and local plans that call for increased transit service in the region, this proposal will deplete state transportation funds *before* transit improvements are undertaken. Expanding the highway before transit is improved essentially guarantees that the transit improvements will never be funded.

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- 6. It will add to sprawl in the region.** Highways facilitate low-density, sprawl-type development. This inefficient development increase property taxes and induces more automobile travel. This, in turn, deteriorates the quality of life and ultimately leads to lower property values.
- 7. It will harm Wisconsin's economy in future years.** As the cost of gasoline rises in the years to come, Wisconsin will need to have a transit infrastructure that allows for non-automobile travel in order to be competitive with other regions in the country. Ignoring those transit infrastructure needs will make Wisconsin less competitive in the 21st century.
- 8. It will harm the health of residents in the corridor.** Increased traffic causes serious health problems, such as asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory problems, for those living near highways. Expansion will only increase the health risk for those living closer to the highway.
- 9. Alternatives to the expansion have been ignored.** Factoring in a more realistic and lower rate of vehicle miles driven would lead to a different recommendation: reconstruct the highway in its existing footprint and improve transit options such as the KRM connector.
- 10. It will take money from other needed transportation improvements in Wisconsin.** Unless a huge tax increase is used to offset the costs of the project, other areas of Wisconsin will have to postpone or eliminate other transportation projects.

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