

RESOLUTION

ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Public Works Committee
INITIATED BY

Public Works Committee
SUBMITTED BY



Benjamin Coopman, Public Works Director
DRAFTED BY

August 10, 2010
DATE DRAFTED

RESOLUTION PLACING ADVISORY REFERENDUM QUESTION ON NOVEMBER BALLOT REGARDING SEGREGATED TRANSPORTATION FUND

1 **WHEREAS**, according to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, over the past decade, the State of
2 Wisconsin has transferred approximately \$1.2 billion from the State's segregated transportation
3 fund to the state's general fund and replaced it with approximately \$800 million in General
4 Obligation (GO) bonds, thereby reducing the amount available for transportation purposes by
5 approximately \$400 million; and,
6

7 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin's practice of transferring money from the segregated transportation fund to
8 the general fund has eroded the public's confidence that the "user fees" they pay through the state
9 gasoline tax and vehicle registration fees will be used for their intended purpose; and,
10

11 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin's practice of replacing the dollars transferred from the state's segregated
12 transportation fund with GO bonds puts our state in the precarious position of bonding to fund
13 ongoing operations; and,
14

15 **WHEREAS**, the Pew Center on the States recently released a report that included Wisconsin as
16 having one of the ten worst budget situations in the country and specifically cited transferring
17 money from the transportation fund for ongoing operations as an example of one of the practices
18 that has put Wisconsin in such an untenable position; and,
19

20 **WHEREAS**, the debt service for these bonds will have to be paid for out of the state's general fund
21 which hinders its ability to fund other programs like Shared Revenue, Youth Aids, Community
22 Aids and courts in the future; and,
23

24 **WHEREAS**, using the states General Obligation (GO) bonds in this way has hurt the state's bond
25 rating, reported by CNN in 2009 as having the second worst GO bond rating in the country; and,
26

27 **WHEREAS**, gas taxes and vehicle registration fees comprise over 90% of the state's segregated
28 transportation account and revenues from these two sources have been declining and are inadequate
29 to meet the existing transportation needs in this state; and,
30

31 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure is a fundamental component in its ability to
32 attract and retain business and produce jobs; and,
33

34 **WHEREAS**, the citizens of Rock County deserve the right to have their voices heard on this
35 important issue; and,
36

37 **WHEREAS**, providing constitutional protection much like our neighbors in Minnesota, Iowa,
38 Michigan and Ohio already have done is the only way to ensure that this practice will not continue.

10-9A-136

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41 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Rock County Board of Supervisors assembled
42 this 9th day of September 2010 that the following question will be put to the voters of Rock
43 County in an advisory referendum during the November 2010 election:

44
45 "Should the Wisconsin Constitution be amended to prohibit any further transfers or lapses
46 from the segregated transportation fund?" and,
47

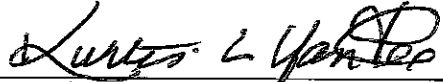
48 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Clerk is directed to cause a copy of the Notice of
49 Referendum to be published in the county's official newspaper as required by law; and,
50

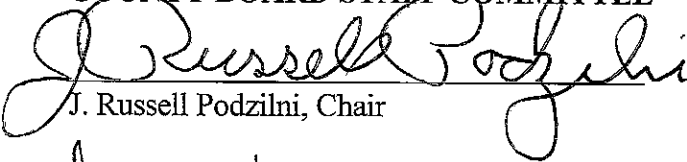
51 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Clerk is directed to provide a copy of this
52 resolution and a copy of the results of the advisory referendum to the Wisconsin Counties
53 Association.

Respectfully submitted,

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

COUNTY BOARD STAFF COMMITTEE


Kurtis Yankee, Chair


J. Russell Podzilni, Chair



Betty Jo Bussie, Vice-Chair

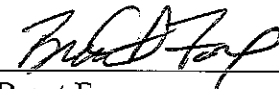

Sandra Kraft, Vice Chair

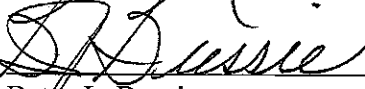

Eva M. Arnold



Eva M. Arnold


David Diestler


Henry Brill



Brent Fox

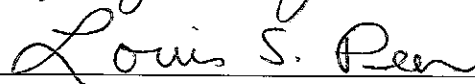

Betty Jo Bussie

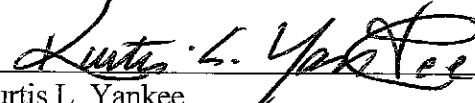

Absent
Ivan Collins

FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution only authorizes an advisory referendum during the November 2010 election and has no fiscal impact on Rock County in and by itself.


Marilynn Jensen

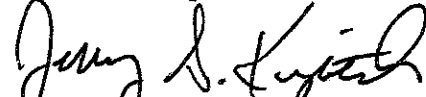

Louis Peer


Kurtis L. Yankee


Jeffrey A. Smith
Finance Director


LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to § 59.52(25).


Jeffrey S. Kuglitsch
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Matter of Policy.


Craig Knutson
County Administrator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
FOR
RESOLUTION PLACING ADVISORY
REFERENDUM QUESTION ON NOVEMBER BALLOT
REGARDING SEGREGATED TRANSPORTATION FUND

Over the last decade and maybe longer, Wisconsin's Governors and Legislators have transferred money from the segregated Transportation Fund into the general State budget. This tactic occurred regardless of party affiliation or control. The Transportation Fund was originally set up as a user fee fund to address all common modes of transportation needs.

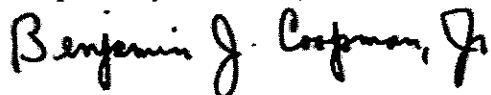
Transferred transportation funds were used for all kinds of non-transportation budget items. These fund transfers have put additional pressure on the state, as it backfilled the budget holes created with debt proceeds. Now a major structural deficit lurks within the state budget. Tough budget choices lie ahead for state lawmakers.

In response to this repeated abuse of the intent of the fund, transportation stakeholders across the state have come together to form a coalition to advocate for a constitutional amendment to protect the integrity of the Transportation Fund. They have suggested that all counties and other local units of government weigh in on this topic by posing a referendum question in November. This coalition, Finding Forward Wisconsin, and others individually as their association or organization will conduct media outreach to help inform the public.

Opponents argue that a constitutional amendment is unnecessary and maybe an abuse of that process. They fear that every time political factions can't agree and resolve their differences, another constitutional amendment for that current issue will be sought. The sanctity of the constitution will be lost.

This referendum is only advisory and requires no further action from the County Board upon receiving the citizen vote results. It is advisory for the state legislators and governor.

Respectfully submitted,



Benjamin J. Coopman, Jr., P.E.
Director of Public Works