

Resolution No. 2-0810

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT A STATEWIDE BINDING REFERENDUM BE HELD TO AMEND THE WISCONSIN CONSTITUTION TO PROHIBIT ANY FURTHER TRANSFERS OR LAPSES FROM THE SEGREGATED TRANSPORTATION FUND

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, using the states general obligation (GO) bonds in this way has hurt the state's bond rating. A report issued by CNN in 2009 listed Wisconsin as having the second worst GO bond rating in the country; and

WHEREAS, gas tax and vehicle registration fees comprise over 90% of the state's segregated transportation account. Revenues from these two sources have been declining and are inadequate to meet the existing transportation needs in this state; and

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

WHEREAS, the citizens of the State of Wisconsin deserve the right to have their voices heard on this important issue; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Iowa County Board of Supervisors that the following question be put to all the people of the State of Wisconsin in a Statewide Binding Referendum:

“Should the Wisconsin Constitution be amended to prohibit any further transfers or lapses from the segregated transportation fund?”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk provide a copy of this resolution to Governor Jim Doyle, State Legislators representing Iowa County and the Wisconsin Counties Association.