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## **Livonia Chamber supports \$2.5 billion road funding plan**

(MAY 23, 2019) – Livonia business leaders say paying 45 cents per gallon in new gasoline taxes now to appropriately fix the state’s inferior roads is better than paying more in the future along with the current hidden costs.

This was the driving force behind a recent vote by the Livonia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to support Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s gas tax plan to generate \$2.5 billion in annual revenue for lasting repairs to Michigan’s crumbling roads and bridges.

“Safe roads and bridges are critical for the growth of businesses here in Livonia and across the state,” said John Hiltz, a chamber board member and president of OHM Advisors in Livonia. “It’s no longer an option to ignore or insufficiently fund this problem. Each year we delay, the price tag increases substantially.”

The chamber’s rationale for supporting this measure includes:

- Companies paying the added taxes now should see lower hidden costs in the future for lost business opportunities and damaged vehicles caused by poor road conditions.
- The gas tax is a user fee that fairly spreads the costs to driving residents and visitors.
- The state constitution requires gas taxes go to roads and bridges, preventing future lawmakers from re-appropriating these funds.
- This infusion of \$2.5 billion into the state will provide new jobs and economic development.

“There was little debate over the need for \$2.5 billion for proper fixes to the roads, but the debate was on the method of collecting the revenue,” said Paul Bohn, chair of the chamber’s board and partner at the law firm of Fausone Bohn LLP in Northville. “We realize nobody wants to pay more taxes; however, in the three months since the Governor presented her plan, no one has presented an alternative plan that provides the necessary funding and mandates the money goes to roads.”

The Livonia Chamber of Commerce, based in Michigan’s ninth-largest city, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that represents 1,000 members. It is governed by a 23-member Board of Directors comprising a diverse collection of representatives from the city’s largest employers and small businesses.

The chamber board is open to listening to alternative viable ideas that generate the \$2.5 billion dedicated to roads, said Bohn, who added: “We believe the can has been kicked to the end of the road.”