

CALIFORNIA ASPHALT INSIDER

The latest asphalt news from the California Asphalt Pavement Association
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→ State transportation funding deal looks less likely as politics drain the will of legislators

If you had "nothing will get done this year" in the office pool for a state transportation funding deal, your bet is looking smarter and smarter every day.

Despite furious grass-roots activity on the part of the construction industry, trade unions and other good-roads advocates, the cold reality of an election year and political posturing make a funding deal less likely with each passing day.

"Something has to be done now," Will Kempton, executive Director of Transportation California, told *Asphalt Insider*. "We can't continue to ignore the condition of our transportation system, which is an important part of our state's economy and our quality of life."

Kempton conceded, however, that nothing getting done this year was one of the possible scenarios heading into 2016 even as the possibility seems too horrible to contemplate.



Evidence continues to mount that the state is falling behind in the condition of its roads due to lack of investment, and further cuts partly brought on by the much-derided "gas tax swap" are making projects disappear faster than beer at a biker bar. Bad roads in California already cost motorists an average of \$762 a year, according to one recent study, and another found that four of the five cities in America with the worst road conditions are located in California.

The California Transportation Commission announced May 18 that the failure to act to address the state's transportation funding crisis means it has been forced to chop \$756 million worth of projects from the state's 5-year transportation improvement plan, and delay another \$755 million worth of work. The long-term plan is known as the "STIP" but may end up being called the "STOP" if current trends continue.

As the bad news starts to cascade down to local communities, reaction has been swift and sharp. In San Luis Obispo County, for example, it was announced that the local cuts included \$19 million worth of design and right-of-way work for Wye Interchange improvements at the intersection of Highway 41 and 46.

"This cut of \$45.1 million in funding to our region is on top of the \$15 million in cuts and delays from prior STIP reductions late last year," said Ron De Carli, San Luis Obispo Council of Governments Executive Director. "This is further proof that state transportation funding cannot be relied on to solve our local transportation needs."

Meanwhile, in the Legislature, elements of the Brown Administration's transportation funding plan were deleted from the state budget. That leaves the "special session" of the Legislature devoted to transportation, which has not accomplished much, as the best hope for getting something done this year. And even those hopes are dimming fast.

For various grass-roots resources to tell your elected officials what you think about the continuing lack of action on the transportation funding issue, click [HERE](#) to visit the CalAPA Legislative Action page.

CalAPA member Astec Inc. has also put together an automated web page where you can send your local elected official in California a sample letter about road funding. Click [HERE](#) to access this handy feature.