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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: September 24, 2014

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **Transportation Funding**

Attached is a recent editorial that appeared in the *Green Valley News*. This editorial factually describes the lack of funding and the cause of the lack of funding to meet transportation needs and adequately repair our streets and highways. The editorial suggests a voter initiative, absent action by the State Legislature, to increase transportation funding through a gas tax increase.

During my recent visit to Washington, DC, federal transportation officials, including Transportation Deputy Secretary Victor Mendez, confirmed the nation is at a critical juncture. Continued inaction to resolve our transportation funding dilemma will not only decrease our individual safety and mobility, it will also impair our national economic competitiveness.

CHH/anc

Attachment

## **EDITORIAL: The quest for road funding**

**Posted: Saturday, September 20, 2014 11:20 am**

*This originally appeared in the Sierra Vista Herald.*

A little more than a week ago the Sierra Vista Area Chamber of Commerce listened to a presentation by Kathy Boyle of the Arizona Department of Transportation on the need to generate more money to maintain the state's highways.

It's not a new message from ADOT, which has traveled the state trying to generate local momentum to find new revenue sources and warn people that the agency is woefully underfunded.

Arizona's gas tax is among the lowest in the nation — ranking 43rd — and hasn't been increased for more than 20 years. Combine that with the reality that people are driving more fuel-efficient cars and it's not surprising there is less money in ADOT coffers.

State lawmakers have added to the problem by taking money designated for highway funds and allocating it elsewhere. This practice began several years ago when the Legislature and Gov. Jan Brewer sought to address a severe budget deficit that developed after the national economy collapsed in 2008.

Lawmakers decided at that time to pull money from the Highway Users Revenue Fund, leaving local counties and municipalities to fend for themselves on finding money for road and highway maintenance. Since 2009, more than \$750 million has been diverted from the fund.

Much like public schools, what should become obvious to state taxpayers is that our lawmakers have decided education and transportation are not funding priorities.

In both cases, state legislators have taken money from designated purposes and reallocated those funds elsewhere in the state budget.

In the case of education, this practice has now resulted in a court order that could cost the state more than \$1.2 billion to refund unpaid shared revenue dating back to 2009.

Transportation and ADOT have no comparable recourse available. The agency has no grounds to sue the Legislature for the decision of lawmakers to rob from the HURF.

The answer to find more funding for our state's highway may require an initiative similar to that of the one approved for schools — which removes the authority of how funding is spent for transportation, from lawmakers.