



## COUNTY ROAD ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

417 SEYMOUR - P.O. BOX 12067 - LANSING, MI 48901

TELEPHONE 517.482.1189 - FAX 517.482.1253

### Talking Points- HB 4106- Moveable Bridges

#### Summary:

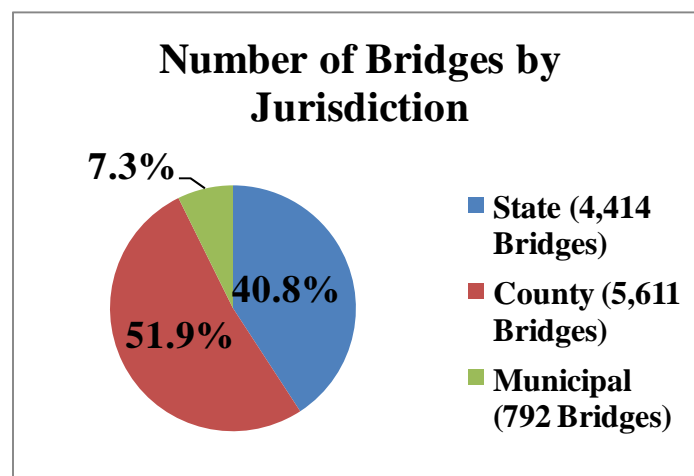
House Bill 4106 was introduced by Rep. Jeff Mayes (D- Bay County) to amend PA 51 by setting aside \$6.5 million off the top of the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) to operate, maintain, and rehabilitate state owned moveable bridges. The \$6.5 million would be directed to the State Trunkline Fund in addition to the half penny of fuel tax revenue already provided to MDOT for maintenance and rehabilitation of state owned bridges. This is a re-introduction of HB 4069 from last session.

#### CRAM position:

**CRAM opposes this legislation.**

#### How are Michigan Bridges funded?

For many years road agencies have had a difficult time keeping up with the expensive maintenance of bridges with the available MTF revenues. In 1997, the last time the gasoline tax was increased, one penny of the four cent increase was dedicated to MDOT bridges. In FY 2005, legislation changed the distribution to direct ½ penny of the increase to MDOT bridges and the other ½ penny to the Local Bridge Fund. The Local Bridge Fund is a competitive program between Michigan's 83 counties and 533 cities and villages. Michigan's local road agencies have jurisdiction over nearly 60% of bridges in the state.



In FY 2008, MDOT received \$23.2 million for the maintenance and rehabilitation of state owned bridges, including moveable bridges. These funds are not used to support Michigan's three largest publicly owned bridges. The Mackinac Bridge, International and Blue Water Bridges collect tolls to operate and maintain their structures. The Ambassador Bridge in Detroit is privately owned.

### **What is the condition of Michigan bridges?**

The Road and Bridge Subcommittee of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Governor's Transportation Funding Task Force concluded that:

“Michigan's investment in MDOT bridges has resulted in an increase in the percentage of bridges rated in good or fair condition.... The recent increase in local-agency bridge funds have not resulted in an increase in the percentage of local-agency bridges rated in good or fair condition. **Once, again, local road agencies have not been able to keep up with MDOT due to the large number of local bridges and the limited funding available.**”

Any legislation that will draw money away from local road agencies would certainly exacerbate this problem. MTF revenues have fallen to FY 1998 levels while construction costs have skyrocketed in recent years. Although there is no doubt all areas of the transportation infrastructure need more revenue, it is not in the best interest of Michigan's road and bridge system to take revenues from local road agencies.

### **Michigan's Moveable Bridges**

Michigan has 25 moveable bridges. Twelve of these bridges are owned by MDOT, 12 by local road agencies and one is privately owned and operated. Of the twelve moveable bridges owned by local road agencies, one is owned by Wayne County. The remaining bridges are owned by the following municipalities; Alpena, Bay City (2), Detroit, Dearborn, Manistee, Menominee, Port Huron (2), South Haven, and the Village of Alanson.

This legislation would give preference in funding to moveable bridges at the expense of the entire local road and bridge network.

### **Alternative Recommendation**

Since the goal of this legislation is to assist moveable bridge owners it would be more appropriate to create a moveable bridge program within the MTF distributions to cities and villages and MDOT, those that have moveable bridges. This would be consistent with MTF “internal” distribution set asides benefiting their respective agency or agencies.