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**Statewide coalition kicks off fight against Tim Eyman's anti-transportation initiative**

*Needed improvements to roads, bridges, overpasses, transit, street maintenance all threatened by I-976, which defunds transportation improvements at all levels*

SPOKANE— Business, labor, civic, environmental and transit organizations from across the state have come together to fight I-976 and protect the state's transportation system. Today, Spokane leaders came together to speak out about I-976, which would repeal billions in transportation investments at the state and local level, threatening road and transit projects across the state.

Right when our growing state should be investing in roads, bridges, rails, and transit options, this initiative reduces city-level maintenance projects, threatens voter-approved regional transit investments, and cuts billions from the state transportation budget. I-976 would cut transportation services for veterans, senior citizens and people with disabilities and funding for the Washington State Patrol.

"I-976 undermines the important transportation infrastructure our community is working so hard to build," said Senate Majority Leader, Andy Billig (D-3). "Whatever you care about in transportation, I-976 will attack it - from pothole repair to transit to bike & pedestrian infrastructure to the North Spokane Corridor. If you care about transportation progress and safety in Spokane you should vote no on I-976."

"We believe we need more investment into our state's infrastructure, not less," said Cara Coon, VP Communications and Public Affairs, Greater Spokane Incorporated. "We cannot support an initiative that could deprioritize our current infrastructure projects, including the North-South Corridor. GSI stands firmly that our community must protect the dollars that improve transportation and urge our community to vote No on I-976."

I-976 also puts at risk important maintenance and improvements needed for road safety. Our state already has 160 bridges that are identified as being in poor condition and a threat to public safety. Even smaller road projects, like potholes, contribute to dangerous driving conditions. Cuts to mass transit options will only put more people on the road, making congestion worse and causing further damage to roadways. There are state, regional and local projects at risk:

- State transportation funding is spent on highway safety improvements, freight mobility projects, transit services and the Washington State Patrol;
- Regionally, the North/South Freeway project could also be affected, as could regional bus services and transit support for people with disabilities and senior citizens;
- Locally, the elimination of the Spokane Transportation Benefit District would mean an annual loss of \$2.5 million a year for street maintenance such as pavement repairs, crack sealing, lane striping, chip seal projects, and pedestrian improvements such as ADA ramp work and sidewalk repairs.

"Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Washington state," said Fuse Washington Program Director Jim Dawson. "I-976 would cut millions from the Multimodal Transportation Account, which helps people get out of their cars by funding important alternatives, like buses, rail, bike and pedestrian projects. I-976 is bad for public transportation and for our environment."

"I have been a laborer for the last 21 years, and during this time, I have never stood up and spoke publicly," said Jack Tortorici, Laborers Local 238. "I have worked on bridges, dams, roads, and building construction projects. That work keeps our cities mobile, functioning, and safe places to live. I-976 will defund projects that give us the ability to do that. That is why I am standing up here today. To protect jobs, families and public safety."

I-976 puts at risk more than \$25 billion in critical transportation funding, at the state, regional and local level. Right when our growing state should be investing in roads, bridges, rails, and transit options, this initiative reduces city-level maintenance projects, threatens voter-approved regional transit solutions, and cuts funding for the state transportation budget.

These funding cuts will hurt the state's transportation system for decades, as neglected projects snowball and become harder, and more expensive, to fix.

A broad coalition of organizations have come together to protect Washington's transportation system. Business, labor, civic, environmental and transit organizations have joined the No on I-976 effort, and are working hard to help the public understand that I-976 cripples the ability of every community to fix roads, expand light rail, maintain ferries and improve freight corridors.

For more information about at-risk projects and the coalition, visit [www.NO976.org](http://www.NO976.org).

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