

**Date: 2/20/15**  
**To: Bruce Blanning**  
**From: David Binder**  
**RE: CA Voters See Need for More Transportation Funding**



David Binder Research

A survey of likely 2016 voters shows that Californians believe the state’s transportation infrastructure is underfunded, and that the quality of California’s roads, highways and bridges is currently low. The survey also revealed that most voters support reallocating money from the federal or state general funds, or increasing corporate taxes to raise more revenue for transportation infrastructure, an issue that most believe is urgent.

In addition, California voters said that they would prefer that new funds be dedicated to improving existing traffic lanes, rather than building new lanes. They also believe that construction contracts should be awarded based on lowest cost rather than the amount of time it takes to complete a project, and should be awarded through competitive bidding.

**TRANSPORTATION SEEN AS UNDERFUNDED**

Voters were asked whether they believe the state of California spends too much, too little, or about the right amount on transportation infrastructure like roads and bridges. 55 percent believe that the state spends either far too little or somewhat too little on transportation infrastructure, compared with only 9 percent that say the state spends either far too much or somewhat too much.

<i>Do you think the state spends too much, too little, or about the right amount on transportation infrastructure?</i>								
	<b>Far Too Much</b>	<b>Somewhat Too Much</b>	<b>About Right</b>	<b>Somewhat Too Little</b>	<b>Far Too Little</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Too Much</b>	<b>Too Little</b>
<b>All Voters</b>	5	4	25	31	24	11	9	55
<b>Democrats</b>	1	3	25	32	25	14	4	57
<b>Republicans</b>	9	6	25	30	20	10	15	50
<b>Independents</b>	6	4	25	32	24	9	10	56
<b>Bay Area</b>	3	3	20	36	27	11	6	63
<b>Central Valley</b>	7	16	23	30	25	9	23	55
<b>Sacramento</b>	2	7	26	34	21	10	9	55
<b>San Diego</b>	6	3	28	33	24		9	57

*\*Findings based on a telephone survey conducted from February 14 through 18, 2016 using both cell phones and land lines. The survey was conducted among 800 registered voters, living in California with working phone numbers, who are expected to vote in the November 2016 general election. The survey has a ±3.5% margin of error.*

Roughly one in four California voters believe that the state spends far too little on transportation infrastructure, while a plurality of about one third believe it spends somewhat too little. Responses showed only marginal variance by party and geographic location, with slight majorities of Republicans, Democrats and independents saying that the state spends too little on transportation infrastructure.

Impressions of the state funding of transportation infrastructure correlate heavily with voters' impressions of the current quality of California's roads, highways and bridges. Of those who believe the quality of California's transportation infrastructure is poor, 75 percent say that the state spends too little.

### **TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE SEEN AS LACKING**

When voters were asked whether they believe the quality of California's transportation infrastructure is currently excellent, good, fair or poor, 65 percent said that they believe the current infrastructure is either fair or poor, with only 2 percent percent saying that California's roads, bridges and highways are in excellent quality.

While these negative feelings about the quality of California's infrastructure are most prominent in Los Angeles and San Diego, they are pervasive throughout the state, with over 60 percent saying that the current transportation infrastructure is fair or poor in every major California media market.

Those voters who said that the current infrastructure is either fair or poor were asked how urgent it is that the state improves its transportation system. Among this group, there was nearly unanimous consensus that the problem is urgent, with 86 percent saying that it is either somewhat or very urgent. That means over half of all California voters believe that improving the state's roads, bridges and highways should be an urgent priority.

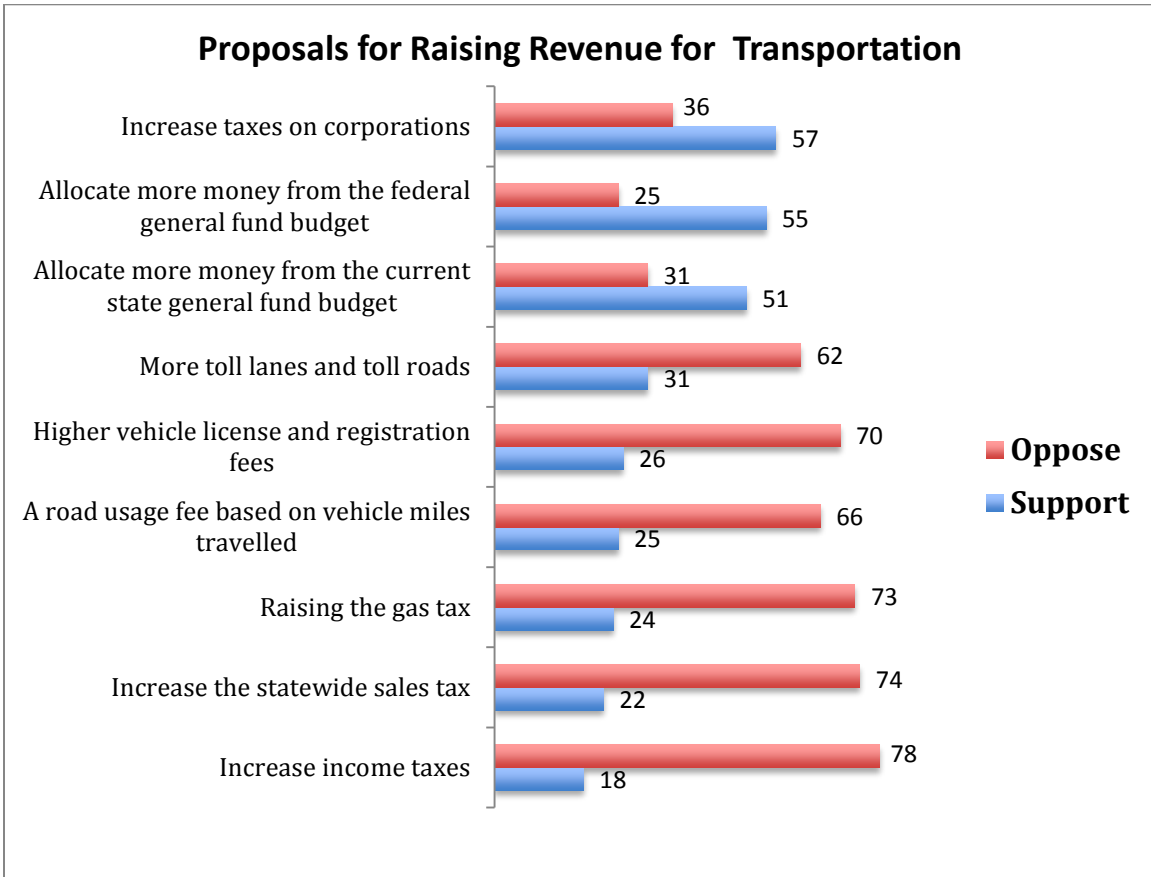
### **SUPPORT FOR ALLOCATING GENERAL FUND MONEY TO TRANSPORTATION; RAISING CORPORATE TAXES**

Despite the pervading sentiment that California's transportation infrastructure is underfunded, and in urgent need of improvement, voters did not indicate a willingness to support increased revenues for transportation infrastructure if they perceived this would affect their pocketbooks. Voters did show support for allocating more state and federal general fund money to transportation, and for increasing taxes on corporations.

Voters were read a list of options that some people have proposed for more increased revenues dedicated to transportation. The proposals that focused on raising taxes and fees for most Californians were generally unpopular, with majorities saying that they are strongly opposed to measures like raising the gas tax, increasing vehicle registration fees, and increasing the statewide sales tax.

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The three measures that did garner support from a majority of voters were allocating more money from the state general fund for transportation, allocating more money from the federal general fund, and raising taxes on corporations.



**PRIORITY PLACED ON IMPROVING EXISTING TRAFFIC LANES; KEEPING CONSTRUCTION COSTS LOW**

The survey also questioned voters’ priorities with regards to how any increased revenue should be spent. When voters were asked whether they prefer new revenue be spent on improving existing lanes traffic lanes or adding new lanes, 68 percent said that they prefer to use the money to improve existing lanes, while 24 percent said they want the money to be spent new traffic lanes.

Although this sentiment was pervasive throughout the state, it was somewhat more prevalent in the Central Valley and Central Coast, where 77 percent said that they would prefer to see lanes repaired.

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Voters also place greater priority on seeing work completed for the lowest possible cost, rather than the quickest amount of time. When asked specifically whether—assuming equal quality—contracts for public infrastructure construction should be awarded to the lowest bidder, or the one that can complete the project in the shortest amount of time, 58 percent say that they prefer that contracts be awarded to the lowest bidder. In addition, 80 percent of voters say that they would be more likely to support increased revenue for transportation if all contracts were awarded through a competitive bidding process.

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