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In Yet Another Poll, Michigan Voters Rank Fixing Infrastructure as the top Problem Facing State

With 2018 Elections Looming, Will the Politicians Finally Fix Michigan's Infrastructure?

LANSING, Mich. — As the state prepares to elect a new governor and all 148 members of the legislature in November, Michigan voters rank fixing infrastructure — roads, bridges, dams, drinking water systems and sewer systems — as the top problem facing the state, according to a new survey conducted by EPIC-MRA for Fix MI State.

The findings of the poll mirror the results of a similar survey conducted by EPIC-MRA at roughly this time last year for Fix MI State. It also marks the fourth statewide survey conducted in the past three years in which Michigan voters ranked fixing infrastructure as the first or second most important problem facing the state.

In the new EPIC-MRA poll, 25 percent of voters said fixing the state's infrastructure is the top problem facing Michigan, followed by improving the quality of education at 16 percent, and controlling crime and drugs at 15 percent (the survey questions are on page 2 of this release). In addition, 60 percent said there is too little funding for infrastructure and 89 percent of voters said fixing infrastructure is important and should be a top priority of the new Legislature that will be elected on Nov. 6. The statewide survey of 600 Michigan voters was conducted Dec. 9-13 and has an error margin of ± 4 percent. The questions were tested for Fix MI State, a campaign led by the Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association (MITA) to build awareness of Michigan's aging, crumbling and failing infrastructure systems. For more about Michigan's unmet infrastructure needs, visit www.FixMIState.org.

“Even with the Flint water crisis and the Fraser sinkhole no longer generating daily stories in state and national media, Michigan voters are well aware of the state's deteriorating infrastructure because they experience it in their lives each and every day,” said EPIC-MRA's Bernie Porn. “While we may be more divided than ever before on many issues, there is broad agreement among all groups of voters that infrastructure is the single top problem facing Michigan, and voters want the legislature to fix it.”

Porn added: “Candidates for governor and the legislature better be prepared to address the issue of fixing Michigan's infrastructure because it's top-of-mind for Michigan voters. In 2018 the main issue will be infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure.”

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In the EPIC-MRA survey, fixing Michigan’s infrastructure was the top concern among both men and women; in all regions of the state except Northern Michigan; among Democrats and Independents, and number two among Republicans by just one point; and among all age groups except seniors, who narrowly cited it number two. The survey found that Michigan voters are most concerned about how failing infrastructure can harm community drinking water systems, reduce safety for motorists on roads and bridges, and contaminate the state’s rivers and lakes.

“In survey after survey, Michigan voters rank fixing Michigan’s infrastructure as the top issue facing the state, and in survey after survey, voters want the politicians in Lansing to fix the problem,” said MITA Executive Vice President Mike Nystrom. “We wonder if the candidates for governor and the legislature will finally listen to voters and fix a massive problem that threatens Michigan’s fresh water resources, our public health and our economy. Fixing Michigan’s unmet infrastructure needs will take decades and a substantial increase in public investment, and voters want Lansing to stop sitting on their hands and get the job done.”

Two recent studies concluded that Michigan must invest \$4 billion more a year for many years to come to fix the state’s aging and failing infrastructure systems. The first study was issued in December 2016 by Gov. Rick Snyder’s 21st Century Infrastructure Commission, and the second was issued in January 2017 by Business Leaders for Michigan.

Here are the infrastructure questions on the December 2017 EPIC-MRA survey:

Now I am going to read a list of state problems and issues Michigan voters say they are concerned about the most. After I read the whole list of nine problems, please tell me which one problem or issue concerns you the most? **[READ AND ROTATE 1 TO 8 BELOW – CODE FIRST AND ONLY ONE RESPONSE]**

25%	Fixing the state’s infrastructure, including roads, bridges and dams, drinking water sources and wastewater treatment systems
16%	Improving the quality of education
15%	Controlling crime and drugs
11%	Improving the state economy and creating more jobs
11%	Providing quality, affordable health care
7%	Protecting Michigan’s environment, our air and water
5%	Controlling state and local government spending
4%	Keeping state and local taxes low
6%	Undecided/Refused

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After the 2018 elections, many new state senators and representatives will be elected and a new state legislative session will begin. For each of the following statements about current state problems or issues, please tell me for each one whether that problem or issue should be a top priority for the new legislature, important but not a top priority, somewhat important, or not really important at all? The first problem or issue is:

RANKED BY “TOP PRIORITY”

[ROTATE Q.16 THROUGH Q.22]		Top Priority	Important but not top	TOTAL IMPORT	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Undec/Refused
_20.	Fixing Michigan’s infrastructure of roads, bridges, dams, drinking water sources and wastewater treatment systems.	61%	28%	89%	9%	2%	---
_16.	Improving the quality of education for our children.	58%	32%	90%	8%	2%	---
_17.	Providing quality, affordable health care for Michigan residents.	53%	30%	83%	11%	6%	---
_19.	Improving the Michigan economy and creating more good paying jobs.	51%	35%	86%	11%	2%	1%
_22.	Protecting Michigan’s environment, our air and water.	50%	37%	87%	11%	1%	1%
_18.	Addressing the problem with crime and controlling the sale and use of drugs.	44%	35%	79%	14%	6%	1%
_21.	Controlling excessive state and local government spending.	44%	34%	78%	14%	6%	2%

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When infrastructure – such as a road or bridge, a community drinking water system, waste water sewer system, a dam or storm water system – fails, it can cause many different problems. Those problems could include flooding of roads, communities and residences; unsafe drinking water for a local community; E-coli, raw sewage and other toxins and pollutants spilling into our rivers and lakes; beach closings; automobile accidents; homes and other structures being damaged by sinkholes; and more. Which of the following concerns you most about Michigan’s infrastructure problems? **[READ 1 THOUGH 6 – ROTATE 1 THROUGH 5]**

45%	Our local drinking water becoming unsafe to drink, cook with, or bath in
22%	The safety of Michigan’s roads and bridges
19%	Our lakes and rivers being contaminated by sewage spills
6%	The harm bad infrastructure can cause to local economies and to the state’s economy
1%	Dams failing, causing flooding to nearby communities
1%	Other (<i>less than 1% each</i>)
N=1	Fracking; damage to our drinking water
N=1	Michigan’s electrical grid
N=1	Sinkholes
N=1	Toxins left in the ground by Brownfields and abandoned industrial sites
6%	Undecided/Refused

Thinking about the public cost of paying to improve Michigan’s infrastructure, including the cost of improving our roads, bridges, and dams, drinking water sources and wastewater treatment systems, do you think Michigan is currently spending enough on those infrastructure needs, is Michigan spending too much, or, do you think Michigan is spending too little on improving our infrastructure? **[IF TOO MUCH/TOO LITTLE, ASK: “Would that be much or somewhat (TOO MUCH/TOO LITTLE)?” AND CODE BEST RESPONSE]**

1%	Spending much too much on infrastructure
2%	Spending somewhat too much on infrastructure
3%	TOTAL TOO MUCH
19%	Spending about the right amount on infrastructure
60%	TOTAL TOO LITTLE
30%	Spending somewhat too little on infrastructure
30%	Spending much too little on infrastructure
18%	Undecided/Refused

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