

Your Voice, Your Future: \$100M transportation bond



STATEWIDE (WGME) -- It's a matter of investing in Maine's infrastructure.

A \$100 million bond is on the table and supporters say the money would not only fix roads and bridges but strengthen our state's economy.

Others worry about borrowing money the state doesn't have.

Thursday, a national transportation research group called TRIP detailed Maine's top 50

transportation challenges.

"Some of the infrastructure we have right now, it's brutal," said Gorham resident Tim Higgins.

Windham resident Calvin Kendall agreed, saying, "Maine roads have a lot of work that needs to be done."

State transportation and economic leaders say the solution is the \$100 million bond from the Feds, which would generate matching funds totaling a quarter of a billion dollars for repairs and improvements.

"A hundred million dollars is a lot of money, it costs a lot to build and maintain," said President of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Dana Connors. "But the truth is, it costs a lot more not to."

Higgins will vote in favor of the transportation bond on Tuesday.

"I know it's a healthy pill to swallow, but because of interest rates being so low right now, the payoff far greater than the investment," he said.

Some of the top ten transportation challenges in Maine include portions of Route 302, the Pine Point Crossing Bridge in Scarborough, parts of River Road in Westbrook and Windham, and expanding the International Marine Terminal.

"I think all of these projects are projects the state has examined to the level where some initial planning has occurred, but the challenge is to come up with funding for it," explained TRIP Director Frank Moretti.

For some residents, the concern is the price tag.

On Facebook, Chris Carpenter wrote, "Understand the reasoning but when do we stop spending money we don't have."

Bond supporters say if we don't borrow now, it will cost more in the future.

"We cannot afford not to borrow at the moment," Kendall said. "If you don't borrow it now, later generations are going to have a whopping bill."

Residents across the state have a chance to cast their ballots Tuesday.

Look for Question #3 to make your voice heard on this issue.