Republicans, Democrats stand together on increased gas tax for Illinois

Democratic state Sen. Martin Sandoval, of Chicago, is joined by Republican state Rep. Margo McDermed, of Mokena, and Republican state Sen. Don DeWitte, of St. Charles, at a news conference Wednesday in Springfield advocating for greater infrastructure spending on roads and bridges. The lawmakers were joined by the Illinois Chamber of Commerce at the press event detailing a new study on the cost of infrastructure inaction. (Capitol News Illinois photo by Jerry Nowicki)

Lawmakers considering every revenue option for infrastructure plan by May 31

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SPRINGFIELD – A new report says subpar roads in Illinois are costing drivers $1,300 to $2,600 in repair, safety and congestion costs annually, and that number will increase if the state does not take action on an infrastructure bill this legislative session.

Unveiling the report Wednesday at the Capitol, representatives of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce joined one Democrat and two Republican lawmakers who said they are ready to take the lead on an infrastructure bill and all sources of revenue – including hikes to the motor fuel tax and vehicle registration fees – are on the table.

“People in my district are telling me they take the side streets to get where they’re going,” McDermed said. “They don’t take the bridge anymore. … This is unacceptable.”

Those lawmakers acknowledged increasing fees or the gas tax will be a difficult sell for some of their colleagues, but “literally every number is on the table, because every member is having input into this process,” DeWitte said.

Sandoval did not give specifics on what measures, if any, lawmakers were considering to drive down labor or project costs rather than upping taxes and fees, though he said they would be included in a final bill.

McDermed said her Will County district is in dire need of infrastructure improvements. Specifically, she said a twin bridge on Interstate 80, which is one of the worst-rated in the state, has caused her constituents to alter their traffic patterns.

“This is unacceptable.”