



Saint Louis County

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NEWS RELEASE

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St. Louis County responds to City of Duluth news conference

Following this afternoon's news conference called by Duluth Mayor Don Ness, St. Louis County Commissioner Steve Raukar, who chairs the county's Public Works and Transportation Committee, issued the following statement:

“St. Louis County remains committed to serving the transportation needs of all of the county's citizens and businesses. While we appreciate the concerns expressed by Duluth Mayor Don Ness, we cannot lose sight of the very real need for investment in the county's 3,000 miles of roads.

Minnesota lawmakers, in 2013, passed this legislation to provide counties a tool to address transportation needs. The law does not suggest revenue sharing. We certainly look to all of the local units of government in our county as vital partners, and value the input they provide. But at the end of the day, our priority is maintaining a safe infrastructure all across our vast county.

As we move forward, regardless of how the Board chooses to vote, we will continue to commit resources as we have always done, based on where the need is greatest. We have clearly demonstrated this with the investment of more than \$65 million in county roads and bridges in Duluth and Hermantown in the last 10 years, as well as additional projects estimated at \$15-20 million planned for these communities in the next two years. Providing services where the need is greatest is true, not just with public works, but with all of our departments and services, including public safety and Public Health and Human Services.

It is never easy to vote for a tax increase of any kind, because we are very aware of the burden it places on our citizens. But when the need for investment in public infrastructure is this great, political courage is necessary to cast the tough vote that will ultimately benefit all.”

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