



Durbin, Duckworth warn of Illinois transportation shutdown if state budget agreement isn't reached

June 21 2017 8:42 AM

WASHINGTON – As Illinois rapidly approaches the end of the state's fiscal year, U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today pressed Governor Bruce Rauner and Illinois state legislative leaders to reach a budget agreement in order to avoid an unnecessary transportation shutdown that could cost tens of thousands of jobs across the state. In a letter to Governor Bruce Rauner, Illinois Senate President John Cullerton, Illinois Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno, Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, and Illinois House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, Sens. Durbin and Duckworth stressed that Congress has provided Illinois with more than \$7.5 billion in federal highway funding through 2020, which amounts to 77 percent of the state's transportation dollars. Unless a budget agreement is reached by July 1, 2017, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will no longer have the budget authority to spend federal money to continue funding more than 700 ongoing construction projects around the state, valued at \$2.3 billion. Halting work on these projects would trigger the loss of an estimated 25,000 jobs and millions in unnecessary costs to the state.

“Illinois is the only state in the nation operating without a budget. With the state already owing a record \$15 billion in unpaid bills, Illinois simply cannot afford the unnecessary costs and the further economic damage that a preventable transportation shut down would produce. We urge you come together to pass a clean budget and finally end the longest state budget stalemate in modern American history,” Sens. Durbin and Duckworth wrote.

IDOT estimates that shutting down construction alone will cost the state \$19 million with an additional \$2 million in costs each day during the stoppage to secure and maintain construction work zones. Without an agreement, already delayed state

payments for public transit and passenger rail to the downstate transit agencies, Metra, Amtrak, and others could come to a halt, forcing cuts in service for Illinois residents, who rely on public transportation every day to get to work and school.

Additionally, without a budget agreement, on July 1, 2017, IDOT will no longer have the authority to spend fiscal year 2017 federal dollars. In fiscal year 2017 alone, Illinois received over \$1.3 billion in federal highway funding. This is money that Illinois desperately needs to repair its aging roads and bridges.

Full text of today's letter is available below:

June 21, 2017

Dear Governor Rauner, President Cullerton, Leader Radogno, Speaker Madigan, and Leader Durkin:

As we rapidly approach the end of the state's fiscal year, Illinois is once again in danger of being forced to shut down construction on transportation projects throughout the state, putting critical federal funding for Illinois transportation projects at risk, accelerating our transportation system's already significant deficit, and jeopardizing the economic future of our state and the safety of its residents. For more than two years, the citizens of Illinois have suffered with the consequences of the ongoing budget crisis. It's time to put politics aside and pass a clean budget that supports Illinois families, Illinois workers, and Illinois's transportation system.

Unless a budget agreement is reached by July 1, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will no longer have the budget authority to continue funding more than 700 ongoing construction projects around the state valued at \$2.3 billion. Stopping work on these projects would result in a self-imposed recession, triggering the loss of an estimated 25,000 jobs and millions in unnecessary costs to the state. IDOT estimates that shutting down construction alone will cost the state \$19 million with an additional \$2 million in costs each day during the stoppage to secure and maintain construction work zones. Without an agreement, already delayed state payments for public transit and passenger rail to the downstate transit agencies, Metra, Amtrak, and others could come to a halt, forcing cuts in service for Illinois residents, who rely on public transportation every day to get to work and school.

The current budget crisis also threatens federal transportation funding for Illinois. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) provides Illinois with more than \$7.5 billion in federal highway funding through 2020, which amounts to 77 percent of our state's transportation dollars. Federal dollars play a critical role in advancing transportation projects throughout the state. In fiscal year (FY) 2017

alone, Illinois received over \$1.3 billion in federal highway funding. However, without a budget agreement, on July 1 IDOT will no longer have the authority to spend those FY 2017 federal dollars. This is money that Illinois desperately needs to repair its aging roads and bridges. The ongoing budget crisis is once again jeopardizing Illinois's ability to take advantage of recent increases in federal transportation funding for Illinois that we've fought hard for.

Illinois is the only state in the nation operating without a budget. With the state already owing a record \$15 billion in unpaid bills, Illinois simply cannot afford the unnecessary costs and the further economic damage that a preventable transportation shut down would produce. We urge you come together to pass a clean budget and finally end the longest state budget stalemate in modern American history.