

Town takes aim at state road funding

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The Saukville Town Board has approved a resolution calling for an amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution requiring a more equitable distribution of state transportation funding.

Town officials, like their colleagues across the state, have long complained that they are not receiving their fair share of money the state collects to support rural roads.

The resolution, which was modeled after a measure previously endorsed by the Wisconsin Towns Association, asks that half of all revenue in the state's segregated Transportation Fund be distributed to local governments for road improvements.

The account holds money collected by the state from gasoline taxes and vehicle registrations.

Town officials contend the state has been increasingly reluctant to share that revenue source for maintenance of town roads.

"Roughly 90% of Wisconsin's public roads are local roads which carry 40% of the state's traffic, yet only 30% of Wisconsin's segregated Transportation Fund spending in 2012 will go for local road projects — down from 40% 20 years ago," the resolution states.

As state funding for roads shrinks, town officials note the burden for local road projects falls on their taxpayers. At the same time, municipalities are faced with the constraints of state-imposed levy limits and reductions in state shared revenues, the resolution said.

"We have been talking about this problem for some time. The towns are facing rather drastic cuts in road funding," Supr. Kate Smallish said.

"The transportation money the state takes in should be divvied up in a more fair manner. I think this is a good idea and it is about time."