



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
of Illinois

Good Evening,

I wanted to provide an update on today's progress on infrastructure funding. The session deadline is looming and not a lot of real progress is being made. There is no need to panic as there is still time to put together a deal, which is generally how things are done in the state capitol.

Generally, support for Transportation infrastructure remains very positive. The obvious horrific conditions with our state's roads, bridges and transit - including some high-profile structural failures have helped. There are some challenges moving forward.

Vertical infrastructure funding options is experiencing some difficulties. We are hearing that identifying revenue sources to help fund vertical construction is proving to be challenging. Most democrats would like to see a \$20B vertical program through a variety of revenue sources. However, republicans are opposed to a vast number of taxes that it would take to fund a program of that size. We have been told that \$10B is a more reasonable number, but that may not be enough to satisfy key democrats.

Complicating matters is the lack of engagement on this issue by Governor Pritzker. He has been focusing on other funding sources such as recreational marijuana and sports gaming as well as his proposal for the graduated income tax to be put on the November 2020 ballot. These three issues are not a slam duck, leaving the Governor short on the votes needed to pass. Senator Cullerton has reiterated his demand that these must pass before taking up an infrastructure bill. While that is extremely disappointing, we are hoping this is more about political posturing and not a snub to infrastructure funding, which he has supported for years.

Every day, I speak with ranking members from both parties about this issue. All are anxious and frustrated that the Governor and his staff have not been leading or hosting meetings with legislative leaders to bring forward a proposal or solution to this crisis. In addition, the Governor has not convened a meeting with industry or stakeholders to ask for our help, advice or assistance.

Bottom line: The solution to the Governor's key legislative issues that he is experiencing some difficulty is infrastructure. Infrastructure is the carrot AND the stick! He can use it as major leverage to get votes for his initiatives (Gaming, Marijuana and potentially Graduated Income Tax).

Finally, a couple of members in the legislature today asked if we would support a post session vote - in mid-June for infrastructure funding. My immediate reply was absolutely not! This issue has been on our agenda for 18 plus months. They all have had plenty of time to draft and debate a bill. I told them that Mid-June become Labor Day, which then becomes October, which then is December veto session. Candidate petitions are circulated in September - so it needs to be now.

The good news: Rep. Luis Arroyo's House working group is progressing quite well. Not only do they fully fund the TFIC plan, they are close in getting a bi-partisan agreement on a final package, including a potential vertical component. There's a lot more potentially great news - which I will share soon.

Thanks again all -- more to come!

