"One out of every three miles of road on the federal-aid eligible road system is now in poor condition" (State of Michigan, 2010). According to the MIDashboard website, 35 percent of the pavements that makes up Michigan's roads, that are eligible for federal assistance, are in "poor" condition and another 47 percent is not too far away from being considered "poor." On top of that, 13.5 percent of all bridges within the state are considered to be "structurally deficient." These are problems that need to be addressed in a timely fashion or we risk suffering great consequences.

Cost-Effective Materials

One way to help create a better road system in a cost-effective manner is to produce better materials at a cheaper rate. An example of this was recently shown in the study produced by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) with the help of private and county road maintenance crews along a stretch of US-10. After a 24-month period, 2 out of 21 test sections were still rated as "excellent" and recommended to be used in the crack filling process along roadways (Bennett and Eacker, pg. 1, 1998). This study showed road crews which materials were best to increase the life of the roadway, therefore becoming cost effective.

Michigan Fuel Surcharge Tax

None of the above proposals can be accomplished if there is a lack of money to fund such an overhaul of Michigan's vital infrastructure. A lack of funding has already proven to be detrimental to the road system. "In 1996, only 64 percent of the state highways were in good or fair condition. In 2007, Michigan's goal of 90 percent of all state highways in good or fair condition was achieved. By 2014, it is predicted that these gains could be significantly decreased, if not completely lost" (Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council, pg. 22, 2010).

Established in the Motor Vehicle Tax Act (PA 403 of 2000), the "gas tax" is a tax on each gallon of gasoline and diesel fuel sold in the State of Michigan (SOM). The tax rate for gasoline is 19 cents per gallon and 15 cents per gallon for diesel fuel. At this rate the SOM

brings in roughly $968 million. However, the tax rates were last changed in 1997 to their current set rate. In 2011 though, these rates are outdated. If the rates were set to fluctuate with inflation, the current combined total amount of revenue is estimated at $1.9877 billion. That is an increase of $1.0197 billion.

An additional source of increased revenue would be to raise the rates on vehicle license fees, registration fees, permits, and other miscellaneous costs already dedicated to the Michigan Transportation Fund. Due to a variation in prices, it is hard to say how many registration fees, permits, etc. are sold annually; however, raising the rates by no more than a dollar will help to provide extra revenue to assist in purchasing the necessary upgrades to Michigan's infrastructure.

Revise Act 51

Finally, the last proposed solution to help solve the problems plaguing the great State of Michigan would be to revise Act 51. The revision of Act 51 would help to ensure that money is not being spent in areas where it is no longer needed like it was when the Act was created. This will provide a more efficient way of spending our limited revenue. These are the several proposals to look at when talking about how to get Michigan back on track to being a state which is able to support itself without making huge cuts in its budget. The State of Michigan needs to act quickly before it is too late and these are just a few to consider when discussing the outdated, deteriorating and dangerous infrastructure housed in this state. A final source of revenue will come from the federal government. If the SOM can procure another $87 million, they will then qualify for $475 million from the federal government. "The Michigan Department of Transportation estimates that an MTF funding level of $1.8 billion would result in the state losing its claim on approximately $475 million in federal transportation funding that is reserved for State of Michigan road projects under the federal SAFETEA-LU law" (Anderson Economic). Because Michigan does not claim this money, it is passed along to another state that does have the funds to match it.