

# Policy Advisory Group Report

## Members

- Jeff Bailey
- Dean Berning
- Bob Bishop
- Scott Burton
- Charlie Canary
- Tom Chalfant
- JB Edmondson
- Jediah French
- Jarrod Hahn
- Dan Lahrman
- John Metzger
- Doug Morehouse
- Bob Troike

## Transportation Policy Advisory Group

The Transportation Policy Advisory Group met on June 22 to discuss railroad and ag transportation issues, INDOT's strategic plan and vision and highway road funding. The PAG also reviewed county policy submissions and drafted resolutions for the 2015 resolutions committee.

Mike Steenhoek, executive director of the Soy Transportation Coalition, alerted the group to several potential issues regarding railroads and ag transportation. He advised farmers to:

- Work with the rail companies to remain an attractive investment, and encourage investment in areas that alleviate transportation burdens for farmers.
- Look for ways to stimulate competition to maintain a more favorable fee structure.
- Evaluate increasing weight limits to boost competition by making waterway transportation options, such as barges, more accessible and expanding access to competing railroads.
  - Factors to consider include:
    - ⊙ Motor safety issues.
    - ⊙ Infrastructure wear and tear.
    - ⊙ Farmer gains.

Brandy Hendrickson, INDOT commissioner, highlighted the strategic plan and vision for the agency. INDOT has shifted its focus from new projects to preservation of existing infrastructure and increased preservation spending by 65 percent. The agency is also focusing on better collaboration with stakeholders. Please see [INDOT's current State Transportation Improvement Program](#) for information on proposed projects. The STIP is an evolving document; 2018 projects will be added soon. Farmers must play an important role in shaping the transportation decisions that will affect their businesses.

State Rep. Ed Soliday (R-Valparaiso), House Roads and Transportation committee chairman, gave a preview of INDOT's highway funding model. The model analyzes different road funding options and current state and local infrastructure. It will be used to prioritize road projects based on data rather than political clout.

The model is interactive, and it will be released for public review later this summer.

The group recommended policy resolutions on insurance, highway funding, highway projects, vehicle and highway regulations and railroads. Tom Chalfant (Randolph, District 6) will serve as the group's representative on the resolutions committee.

### **CALL TO ACTION**

#### **Farmers and County Farm Bureaus can:**

- Review [INDOT's current State Transportation Improvement Program](#) and provide feedback to the [agency](#).

#### **County Farm Bureaus can:**

- Review INDOT's STIP for ideas for policy recommendations.
- Use the highway funding model to review outcomes from alternatives for road funding and provide feedback through the policy development process or by communicating to the INFB public policy staff.

Questions regarding the activities of the Transportation PAG can be directed to one of the group members or to [Amy Cornell](#), 317-692-8005, the Farm Bureau staff member facilitating the group.