



# Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

*Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children*

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October 31, 2017

Members of the House Transportation Committee:

As Chair of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition, I am writing to express our **opposition** to **HB 4954** in its current form. As written, this bill would eliminate the requirement for communities to fund non-motorized infrastructure. These funds are a vital source of funding for sidewalks and pathways that allow citizens of all ages and abilities to get safely from home to school, work, and recreation.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan is a coalition dedicated to reducing childhood obesity in Michigan through strategic policy initiatives while working with state government leaders. HKHM is comprised of executive-level decision makers from more than 200 organizations statewide dedicated to addressing childhood obesity and improving the health of Michigan's youngest residents. These organizations represent government, public and private sectors, school districts, health care and non-profit organizations.

The funding in current statute has contributed to a vast number of local community infrastructure projects in Michigan such as bike lanes, sidewalks, trail connectors, and wide shoulders. Additionally, requiring MDOT and local road agencies to prepare a five-year plan for improving nonmotorized transportation is a critical tool for connecting other nonmotorized infrastructure projects statewide like the Iron Belle Trail or the Joe Louis Greenway in Detroit. Reasonable planning, collaboration and implementation have doubtlessly saved Michiganders from injury and death when traversing our roads and contributed to the safe routes to school that we all want for our children.

Unhealthy weight in children leads to lifelong chronic health conditions which burden individuals, families, employers, and government. Poor community design creates real barriers to active lifestyle, such as a lack of road crossings, dangerous road and community conditions and a myriad of other safety hazards. While we appreciate the sponsor's focus on road funding, we cannot support removing requirements that support a basic level of infrastructure funding for more active methods of transportation and ensuring safe, healthy communities into the future.

Sincerely,

Andrew Schepers  
Director, Michigan Govt. Relations  
American Cancer Society  
Chair, Healthy Kids, Health Michigan Coalition.