Stop the I-94 Expansion Project

Gov. Evers plans to include the I-94 expansion project between the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges in Milwaukee. Due to serious environmental and racial justice concerns about this a project, not to mention its steep price tag and research to show that expansions do not reduce congestion, we must make sure that this project is halted (again!)

The I-94 expansion project was and still is a bad idea for so many reasons:

1. **It would worsen the climate crisis.** The transportation sector is the largest contributor to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions in the US. Expanding highway infrastructure that caters to single passenger traffic will increase carbon emissions. This project is in direct conflict with the expressed goals of the Governor’s Climate Task Force. Here’s the bottom line: climate-friendly governors do not expand highways.

2. **It would negatively impact public health.** Because highway expansion almost always increases the number of cars on the road, air pollution increases with these projects. Traffic pollution causes asthma, cardiovascular disease and dementia. Entertaining the idea of expanding a highway during a pandemic is inexcusable.

3. **It would exacerbate racial injustice.** Wisconsin’s decades-long focus on highway transportation instead of public transit investments has worsened the region’s racial and economic segregation. Not only are highways a physical barrier, but they also increase air pollution in the surrounding communities - which are Communities of Color. In 2014, the federal government found that the Zoo Interchange caused “irreparable harm,” to minority communities. This project on the same corridor is no different. Members of low-income and minority communities often lack reliable transportation options. Yet, this project is being reconsidered even at a time of heightened awareness about structural racism in Wisconsin.

4. **It would be costly.** Spending an estimated $1 billion on this project at the expense of fixing our local roads and repairing our existing road and transit infrastructure is a big price to pay for a mere 3.5 miles of interstate. Meanwhile, Wisconsin’s public transportation system and local road system are languishing due to lack of investment.

5. **It would not fix congestion** as proponents of the project suggest; in fact - highway expansions often make congestion worse shortly after construction is complete! This is because of induced demand -- essentially “if you build it, they will come.” Why should a damaging project move forward to make the very thing proponents of the project want to solve even worse?

It is abundantly clear: expanding I-94 during a time of economic crisis, public health concern, and increased awareness over racial disparities is irresponsible and harmful.