



Letter to the Editor

The Township Highway Commissioners of Illinois (THCOI) is the statewide organization for elected Highway Commissioners. These Commissioners are responsible for over 50% of the roads in Illinois, both rural and urban, and are the subject of recent talks about consolidation.

Consolidation or elimination can be done, but it must be for the right reasons and responsibly, without the elimination or reduction of necessary services to the people currently served by those Road Districts.

Before any decision on consolidation or elimination occurs, we hope those involved consider public safety and taxpayer impact. For one, these proposed actions eliminate the accountability of the elected Highway Commissioner, but more importantly, lead to “main” or “priority” routes being lower priorities for maintenance and snow plowing. Further, the body taking control of any consolidated or discontinued Road District assumes the taxing authority. Therefore, no tax rates will go down unless the public body taking control determines that it will lower the (former) Road District rate.

Further under these new laws, there is no requirement to show any action to consolidate is in the best interests of the taxpayers. At a minimum, they should be changed to require an independent entity, with experience in local government, to provide a cost study before any vote is taken so everyone can make an informed decision.