



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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If you want to Fix a Problem, Start with a Plan

Interstate 70 is a parking lot, and anyone who has driven down I-70 this summer knows what I mean by that. Although the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) has done a great job in resurfacing I-70 to make it smoother for Missouri motorists, these repaving efforts have not fixed the pressing problem — that we have outgrown and overused the highway. I-70 had a 20-year life expectancy to carry 20,000 vehicles per day, 15 percent of which would be heavy trucks. It has been 50 years, and the highway carries 40,000 vehicles each day, 40 percent of which are trucks. As Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, I have come up with a proposal to rebuild I-70 and I-44, and take care of all other roads in Missouri.

My proposal would dedicate two lanes in each direction for large trucks and two lanes for cars. A concrete barrier along the median would divide the highway and prevent accidents. The proposal would institute a 10-year, 1-cent sales tax that would raise approximately \$7.3 billion. Cities that have already passed a tax to help fund transportation would not pay the additional sales tax, but their sales taxes would be raised to total 1 cent. Finally, I-70 and I-44 would be pulled out of MoDOT's funding formula. Therefore, each year the formula would see \$70 to \$90 million more to be spent keeping the interstates smooth and safe.

Imagine what upgrades you would see on your local roads if MoDOT had another \$70 million each year for 10 years. Missouri would again have the best roads in the nation. With our location in the center of the nation, and with Kansas City and St. Louis on our state borders, Missouri could become the nation's distribution center.

Why a 1-cent sales tax? With the price of fuel already on the rise, a fuel tax would not work. It would take a 23-cent fuel tax increase to raise the same revenue as a 1-cent sales tax.

Why not toll roads? I want to make Missouri the distribution center of the nation. If a company knew it could move freely from Kansas City to St. Louis, think of the businesses that would come to Missouri. Also, truck drivers are not the ones covering the cost of tolls; it is always passed down to the consumer.

I have worked with lawmakers, business leaders and farmers in developing this road plan, and I know there is a demand for something to be done about our overburdened interstate highways. I am still open for funding suggestions. This has not been introduced in the Senate, so if anyone has a funding proposal to fix these worn-out roads, I would appreciate your opinion. Until then, I will continue working to institute this needed plan.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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