



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Capitol Building, Room 332

Senate District 21
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
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An Economy-Boosting Transportation Funding Plan

In previous columns, I've outlined the General Assembly's top legislative issues — property tax reform, illegal immigration, and health care. Another important issue that hasn't received much attention this session is the desperate need for transportation funding in Missouri.

During a press conference with fellow colleague Sen. John Loudon, R-Chesterfield, and Missouri Department of Transportation's Chief Engineer Kevin Keith, I expressed the importance of providing adequate funding for transportation needs throughout our state.

Senate Joint Resolution 43 is a proposed constitutional amendment that would distribute ten percent of the general revenue growth to the State Road Fund and the State Transportation Fund. Beginning with fiscal year (FY) 2010, ten percent of the growth in general revenue occurring between FY 2008 and FY 2009 would be transferred to the funds mentioned above, with the State Road Fund receiving 95 percent and the State Transportation Fund receiving five percent of the transfer.

The Missouri Highway and Transportation Departments estimate that this proposal would provide \$1 billion for road construction and expenditures as well as creating approximately 42,000 new jobs in our state. Over the next 10-20 years, this proposal would allow our state to maintain roads and undertake new transportation projects.

MoDOT is supportive of the Senate's initiative to put a solution on the table to fund transportation in our state. This plan shows Missourians that lawmakers are committed to doing everything we can with the dollars they send us.

I want to stress that I am not discarding any funding plan that I drafted and supported in previous legislative sessions. Senate Joint Resolution 43 is just another tool in the toolbox for the General Assembly and state departments to use.

Last session, I sponsored Senate Bill 310, which would have submitted to Missouri voters a one-cent sales tax proposal to assist in the reconstruction, rebuilding, construction, and conversion of Interstate 70 and Interstate 44 into an eight-lane interstate system. The bill would have established the “State Transportation Fund” where the proceeds of the sales and use tax would have been deposited. This tax increase would have expired on December 31, 2018. The purpose of the bill was to bring attention to the transportation crisis in our state and the opportunity we have to make Missouri the nation’s distribution center.

Recently, the Senate Transportation Committee heard several measures that could also provide funding for our state’s transportation needs. Senate Bill 793 would allow MoDOT to construct toll roads under certain conditions, and Senate Joint Resolution 31 would propose a constitutional change to allow MoDOT to construct and maintain toll roads. As the Senate Transportation Committee chair, I want to ensure that if tolls are implemented in our state, traffic will not switch to alternative routes to avoid paying a toll.

I don’t know what the exact answer is to our state’s transportation funding problem, but I have always been a supporter of trying to get the debate started so we can discuss the various solutions and come up with the perfect answer. To do this, Missouri’s need for adequate transportation funding must rise to the top of our legislative efforts.

If you have any questions or comments about transportation funding in our state or any other topic, please call my office toll free (866) 768-3987 or send me an e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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