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September 11, 2009

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## **The Stouffer Report: Truck-only Lanes Coming Soon to Missouri**

Missouri is a step closer to getting ["truck-only" lanes](#) along part of Interstate 70. The test area for the proposal will run through the heart of rural Missouri — Saline and Cooper Counties.

For the past 10 years, the federal government has been studying how traffic running on I-70 could be improved between St. Louis and Kansas City. The first interstate highways were built in 1956. The section of I-70 that runs through rural Missouri is pretty much the same road that was built 50 years ago, with two lanes of traffic running in each direction, but also with thousands more vehicles driving on it every day now than then.

As it is with just about anything these days, money is the question. The [Federal Highway Administration](#) has given us the green light to build truck-only lanes all across I-70, but it comes with a \$4 billion price tag. We are eligible for federal money, and the plan is to try to get \$200 million in stimulus funds to build the lanes along a 30-mile stretch in Cooper and Saline counties. This would accomplish two things: give us an idea of what the interstate would look like and give time to get the money needed to finish the job statewide.

The idea of truck-only lanes, the way it would be done in Missouri, is ground-breaking. There are similar roads in different parts of the country, but they are not quite the same as what we are envisioning. What we have proposed is reinforced inside lanes, separated by a concrete barrier, for big rigs and two outer lanes, separated by a grassy median, for cars. Trucks would either merge into the outer lanes in order to get to an

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exit ramp or would have their own interchange, depending on the area.

The ultimate goal is to build truck-only lanes along I-70 from Kansas City to the Ohio-West Virginia state line, which is around 800 miles altogether. A lot of the goods that are shipped across the country use the interstate that runs right through our backyard, and this is why it is so crucial to find a way to start the construction. This is the type of project that is custom-made for the stimulus package. These are the shovel-ready projects that need an injection of one-time funds to bring in the jobs and get America working again.

Aside from the prospect of getting \$200 million to build the 30 miles of truck-only road in Saline and Cooper counties, I am not sure what methods would be used to secure all of the money needed to complete Missouri's portion of the project. These are questions the folks at [MoDOT](#) are considering. I am sure we will be talking about this when lawmakers come back to Jefferson City in January.

*Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.*

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](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).



[bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov) | [www.senate.mo.gov/stouffer](http://www.senate.mo.gov/stouffer)  
State Capitol, Room 332, Jefferson City, MO 65101 | (866) 768-3987