



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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Week of March 9, 2009

First Truly Agreed Bill of the Session Promotes Fiscal Accountability

Last week, I discussed the federal stimulus plan, and the questions and concerns I have about the funding. I am pleased to say that the state Legislature has taken action to address some of these concerns by passing Senate Bill 313, legislation I filed that creates special funds for managing federal stimulus dollars accepted by Missouri from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Senate Bill 313 is the first bill this session that has been agreed to by both the House and Senate. Since the legislation includes an emergency clause, it will go into effect immediately upon the governor's signature. The bill works by ensuring that any temporary funding the state of Missouri receives from the federal stimulus plan goes into one of two special funds. The "Federal Budget Stabilization Fund" will take in money the state receives to supplement on-going programs. All other funds received under the act will be deposited into the "Federal Stimulus Fund."

This legislation is necessary for the state of Missouri to accept any federal stimulus monies. The federal government has stipulated that states must have accountability measures in place before any funding will be distributed. Senate Bill 313 makes this possible, without it, we receive nothing.

The bill will allow Missouri to better address some of the concerns I highlighted last week, including the worry that temporary funding could be used for long-term projects. I want to make sure dollars that come to Missouri are tracked properly and invested wisely. When we return from mid-session recess on March 23rd, much of our work will be focused on the state budget for FY 2010 (which begins on July 1, 2009).

During the appropriations process, these two new funds will allow us to easily identify what programs, services, or projects are funded by this temporary money. The federal funding will run out in two years, and the last thing we want to do is put ourselves in a situation where we become dependent on a temporary source.

The governor has said publicly that he is supportive of creating these funds, and I am hopeful that Senate Bill 313 will receive his signature. We want to establish these funds in the state treasury as soon as possible so they can start receiving any federal funds Missouri decides to accept. I will continue to keep you aware of the progress we make on the appropriations process as we work to responsibly invest taxpayer dollars.

*Senator Gary Nodler represents the people of Newton, Jasper
and Dade counties in the Missouri Senate.*