



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Two state road plans vary a lot on funding

News and Tribune
Maureen Hayden
3/7/16

INDIANAPOLIS — Tim Wilson is watching the down-to-the wire negotiations in the Statehouse on road funding with keen interest. If a House Republican plan to hike gas taxes to pay for roads prevails, his rural Vermillion County would get a half-million dollars more next year to maintain 500 miles of local roads — many already turned back to gravel. If Senate Republicans' road-funding plan prevails — as appears increasingly likely — the county on Indiana's western border won't get a nickel more. "Our roads are in terrible shape, but we're going to get nothing," predicted Wilson, a county commissioner. "And why does that not surprise me?" Communities around the state could see big, immediate differences in road dollars depending on which formula prevails in this final legislative week. The source of the money isn't the only question. Also at issue is how the money is divvied up. By Thursday — the announced final day of the Legislature's 2016 session — lawmakers must strike a deal that has knotted them in debate for the past 10 weeks. The House-backed plan pours an estimated \$714 million into roads by raising gas taxes by 4 pennies and cigarette taxes by \$1 per pack. Under that plan — favored by Wilson and many members of the Association of Indiana Counties — locals would see across-the-board increases of more than 22 percent in state road dollars for at least the next two years.

http://www.newsandtribune.com/news/two-state-road-plans-vary-a-lot-on-funding/article_6e927196-e4bc-11e5-bbfa-af9b9b7eb6e6.html Also,

<http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/House-GOP-moving-away-from-cigarette--gas-tax-increases-11903126>

3 big topics, 4 days remain

The Journal Gazette
Niki Kelly
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INDIANAPOLIS – Lawmakers have three big predicaments left in the remaining days of the session – slowing the scourge of methamphetamine, settling a road funding debate and stemming the teacher shortage. And they only have four days to do it – thanks to a self-imposed early exit. The bulk of the negotiating will be on an infrastructure bill. Gov. Mike Pence and Senate Republicans have focused on short-term help while House Republicans have pushed a long-term solution that includes tax increases. "There's not a crisis. We don't have a crumbling infrastructure," said GOP House Speaker Brian Bosma "We do have an infrastructure that is in need of repair. And it needs a long-term solution for maintenance and prevention." Neither side has really budged since day one of the session in January. Senate President Pro Tem David

Long, R-Fort Wayne, said his caucus doesn't support the tax hikes, acknowledging the topic needs further study. "We don't face a crisis but we need to continue to deal with the transportation needs of the state," he said. "The Senate bill does that." The minimum that could get done seems to be allowing Pence to tap state reserves for about \$470 million later this year for state preservation and maintenance. There also is disagreement on how to help counties, cities and towns with their own road-funding needs. Both chambers had bills sending \$420 million in excess local option income tax revenue back to local government. The state had been withholding the funds as a cushion for possible recession.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/3-big-topics--4-days-remain-11846789>

Valley legislators give final update before end of session

The Tribune-Star
Howard Greninger
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Road funding, education, regional cities initiative and the need to seek a local food and beverage tax in the Indiana General Assembly's biennial budget session in 2017 were among highlights from Wabash Valley legislators during a Third House legislative forum Saturday in Indiana State University's Landini Center Recital Hall. With just one week to go, bills that have passed through the Indiana House and Senate now go to conference committees to hammer out differences in bills from both chambers. Both chambers are to conclude the legislative session by 10 a.m. March 14, but the legislature will likely conclude no later than March 11. Road funding was a top issue in this year's legislative session. Indiana House bills for road funding included dedicating \$500 million in state sales tax and an increase in the state gas tax by as much as 5 cents; however, all of those taxing issues were removed in the Indiana Senate. "I think the Senate versions coming out are putting a large amount of money into both local and state roads without increasing taxes, using budget reserves ... to get over \$1.3 billion to state roads and \$1.1 billion to local roads," said state Sen. John Ford, R-Terre Haute. Other participants at the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce event included state Reps. Bob Heaton, R-Terre Haute; Clyde Kersey, D-Terre Haute; and Alan Morrison, R-Terre Haute. Heaton said one Senate bill (SB 333), which is endorsed by Gov. Mike Pence and relies on \$1.4 billion in surplus and borrowed funds to patch up state and local roads through 2020, would also allow cities with a population of at least 20,000 to implement a wheel tax to help generate funding for roads.

http://www.tribstar.com/news/local_news/valley-legislators-give-final-update-before-end-of-session/article_906ff49b-f56c-50b0-a347-5cc23983941c.html

Meeting Set For House, Senate Leaders and Pence

Inside INdiana Business
Dan McGowan
3/4/16

INDIANAPOLIS - A Senate bill to fund major transportation projects throughout the state as well as the state's Regional Cities Initiative has cleared the House with changes. House members included provisions Thursday to pay for road and bridge fixes, in part, through gas and cigarette tax hikes. Our partners at WIBC/Network Indiana report a meeting among Governor Mike Pence, House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-88) and Senate President Pro Tem David Long (R-16) will aim to hash out several key differences in how future road and bridge work will ultimately be funded. WIBC/Network Indiana reports Long is "adamant" the Senate won't agree to raising gas and cigarette taxes, adding more discussion is needed on which projects need the funding and from where the funds will come. The original bill that would provide an additional \$42 million to Regional Cities died earlier this week, but the funding mechanism was moved out of that bill and into Senate Bill 333, the Senate's take on transportation funding. That measure, approved in the House Thursday by a 57-33 margin, heads back to the Senate for final debate. House Bill 1001, which addresses transportation, but not Regional Cities, was approved early this week and is

awaiting discussion by members of a Senate and House conference committee. Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee stripped out some portions of the bill, including the cigarette and gas tax increases. <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/31385473/meeting-set-for-house-senate-leaders-and-pence>

House approves bill for roads, Regional Cities

The Journal Gazette

Niki Kelly

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INDIANAPOLIS - A slim House vote of 57-35 today on a long-term road plan that includes tax increases set up final negotiations for lawmakers next week on infrastructure dollars. Senate Bill 333 also contains an additional \$42 million for a Regional Cities initiative benefiting northeast Indiana that has gotten caught up in the battle between the House and the Senate on a road funding approach. "It's easy to put together a significant, understandable and worthwhile roads package without tax increases" House Democrat Leader Scott Pelath said. "We could figure it out today and run it to the governor. The revenue is available. The will is there." But House Republicans - led by Speaker Brian Bosma - have continued to push an increase in the state gas tax as well as cigarette tax to provide additional dollars on a continuing basis. Rep. Jerry Torr, R-Carmel, took a moment to talk about the regional cities money that Gov. Mike Pence sought. The legislature last year provided \$84 million for the program, but the administration declared three winners instead of two, and came back asking for more cash. "It's about cities and counties getting together to create a region that has assets that draw employers and a talented workforce to help our economy," Torr said. "In 10, 20, 30 years down the road we are going to realize this has been transformative." The bill will go to conference committee, where leaders in the House and Senate will try to find a compromise. The legislature will wrap up next week. Pence and Senate Republicans are pushing for a one-time infusion of cash for state and local roads and a study over the summer for future needs. Senate President Pro Tem David Long, R-Fort Wayne, made clear Thursday that tax hikes are unacceptable. And he noted the long-term solution isn't clear yet. <http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/House-approves-bill-for-roads--Regional-Cities-11827843>

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