



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

January 28, 2016

Committees approve opposing roads bills

Indianapolis Star
John Tuohy
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Competing Republican bills to fund \$1 billion in upgrades to the state's roads and bridges were passed out of their respective committees in the Indiana General Assembly house and senate Thursday. The House Ways and Means committee advanced House Bill 1001 to the house floor by a 14-7 vote. The Senate Appropriations committee passed Senate Bill 333 with an 11-0 vote. The house bill would raise the fuel tax 4 cents a gallon to 22 cents and would transfer 4 cents of the 7 cents sales tax on fuel to generate an additional \$1 billion over the next five years and beyond. It also would hike the cigarette tax by \$1 per pack, which would replace about \$300 million in the fuel sales taxes diverted from the general fund. The bill also calls for charging electric car owners a \$100 yearly registration fee and allowing cities – as well as counties - to charge a "wheel tax," which is a charge of up to \$50 on car registrations to help fund local projects. The senate bill would use \$241 million in state surplus funds, \$240 million through borrowing and \$450 million in legislative appropriations to raise more than \$1 billion over the next four years. <http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2016/01/28/dueling-roads-bills-get-hearings/79405788/>

State portion of heavy-haul road behind original schedule

News and Tribune
Elizabeth Beilman
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JEFFERSONVILLE — Although the east-end bridge will open around October, one segment of the \$30.4 million heavy haul road won't be finished by then, as originally planned. Will Wingfield, spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation, said the state's portion of the road connecting Ind. 265 to the Port of Indiana-Jeffersonville has yet to be designed, as environmental analysis of the land isn't complete. "At this point, the development of the project has taken longer than anticipated, so it's likely not going to be in that timeframe but exactly [when], we're still looking to determine," Wingfield said. Officials at the Port of Indiana-Jeffersonville and River Ridge Commerce Center — both which will have direct access to the road — don't seem troubled by the schedule change. "The fact that the port will be connected to the east-end crossing is the big news," Scott Stewart, port director for Jeffersonville's port, stated in an email. "Businesses take a long-term view when they plan new investment or the expansion of current facilities. The transportation corridor already factors into the thinking of existing and potential port companies." In fact, Stewart said he doesn't even view the change as a delay. "The segment connecting the port to the [Ind. 265] interchange simply requires greater engineering and design than the segment at River Ridge," he continued. <http://www.newsandtribune.com/news/state-portion-of->

heavy-haul-road-behind-original-schedule/article_3cc9b314-c459-11e5-beff-1f12eb5c7d3e.html

Road Funding To Include Tolling Study

Indiana Public Media

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The bill proposing tax hikes to fund improvements to the state's aging infrastructure also includes a provision for possibly adding tolls. The bill orders the Indiana Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of tolls on Interstates 65 and 70. State law requires legislative approval of any tolls, and federal law bans tolls on roads that used to be free. But Congress granted three states an exception to the toll ban. House Roads and Transportation Chairman Ed Soliday says the government told Indiana lawmakers to apply for the toll road exceptions since the approved states haven't moved forward on tolling projects. "The federal government told us, 'go ahead and apply because we're going to tell them, if they don't do something, use it or lose it,'" Soliday said. The current road funding debate stems from declining gas tax collections, Soliday said, a decline which is expected to accelerate when new fuel efficiency standards are fully implemented in nine years. "The whole concept of looking at tolling is that gasoline tax starts to off in its yield, so there's going to have to be something to take its place." Soliday says tolls would raise a million dollars a day for state revenues. <http://indianapublicmedia.org/news/road-funding-include-tolling-study-92762/>

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