

Action Needed: Show Your Support for Transportation Funding Through SJR 2/HJR 9

Proposal Would Allocate Some Growth in Oil & Gas Severance Tax Revenue to the State Highway Fund

At the beginning of the regular legislative session, the Governor, Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House all mentioned on multiple occasions that education, water and transportation would be their highest priority issues. They dealt with water and education, but fell short with transportation.

TxDOT advised the Legislature that a minimum of \$4 billion in additional transportation funding is needed annually just to keep road conditions and congestion from deteriorating further. Funding for new highway construction is set to plunge over the next two years as borrowing and one-time funding sources are exhausted.

Actions taken by the Legislature in the regular session added only \$850 million a year for transportation funding. Now in the special session, there is an opportunity to more than double that amount.

Senators Robert Nichols and Tommy Williams have filed SJR 2 that would allocate some of the revenue growth from the oil and gas severance tax to the State Highway Fund. Rep. Larry Phillips has filed HJR 9 as a companion in the House.

The joint resolution would put a constitutional amendment before the voters in November. Voters would be asked if they want half of the severance taxes that now goes to the state's Rainy Day Fund to instead go to building and maintaining highways. That would generate an estimated \$900 million per year in additional highway funding in 2014 and 2015.

Oil production in Texas is growing dramatically and huge natural gas fields have been discovered and will be developed in the years ahead as natural gas



demand grows and prices improve. That will mean more funding for transportation and at the same time will keep replenishing the Rainy Day Fund.

The Governor is considering adding an item to the call for the special session to enable the Legislature to act on SJR 2/HJR 9.

Only the Governor can add an item to the legislative agenda during a special session.

The Transportation Advocates of Texas strongly urges you to write to the Governor and urge him to add transportation funding to the call for the special session so that the Legislature can act on SJR 2/HJR 9.

Further, please let Speaker of the House Joe Straus, Lt. Governor David Dewhurst and members of the Legislature know that you support SJR 2/HJR 9 and the constitutional amendment directing more funding to the State Highway Fund.