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Statement By:
Bob Burleson, President, Florida Transportation Builders' Association
Regarding House Proposal to Tax and Sweep State Transportation Trust Fund;
Kick the Can Down the Road

“Yet again, funding for the Florida Department of Transportation is in jeopardy. Yesterday, members of the House Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development (TED) outlined their first attempt to enact job-killing legislation that would bring transportation projects to a standstill. The Florida Transportation Builders' Association (FTBA) cannot condone the actions of House leadership who, through a piecemeal process of budget allocations, continuously attack the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) and in doing so; break their trust with Florida citizens.

Among other possibilities mentioned by the TED committee, potential allocations included an eight percent service charge for STTF user fee collections and a multimillion dollar raid of the trust fund.

The proposed eight percent service charge would create an even larger and devastating blow to the road and bridge building industry in Florida. An earlier trust fund service charge was repealed under Governor Jeb Bush and *is not* included in the Governor's or Senate's budget outline. This proposed service charge would be a recurring measure, diverting more than \$160 million cash this year alone in gas tax user fees from the trust fund into general revenue coffers. If enacted, a total of \$800 million cash will be removed from DOT's five-year work plan which translates into the elimination of \$2.5 billion worth of infrastructure projects. Over a five-year period, more than 70,000 jobs would potentially be terminated.

While Washington doesn't get everything right, Congress only allows the federal trust fund transportation dollars to be spent on transportation. Last year, Florida saw a trust fund raid veto while receiving federal economic stimulus money to supplement FDOT's barebones budget. This year, we know the economic stimulus funds are gone but remain hopeful that the House will see the error in its ways.

The Florida Transportation Builders' Association (FTBA) understands that transportation makes Florida work. The Governor and the Senate seem to understand this as well, but the House is content to kick the can down the road. It may be early in the legislative process but a vote to raid the State Transportation Trust Fund or intact a service charge is ultimately a vote to eliminate Florida jobs. We hope House leadership recognizes this as the budget allocations continue and take guidance from Governor Scott and the Senate who understand the priority for Florida is to create jobs, not kill them.”

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