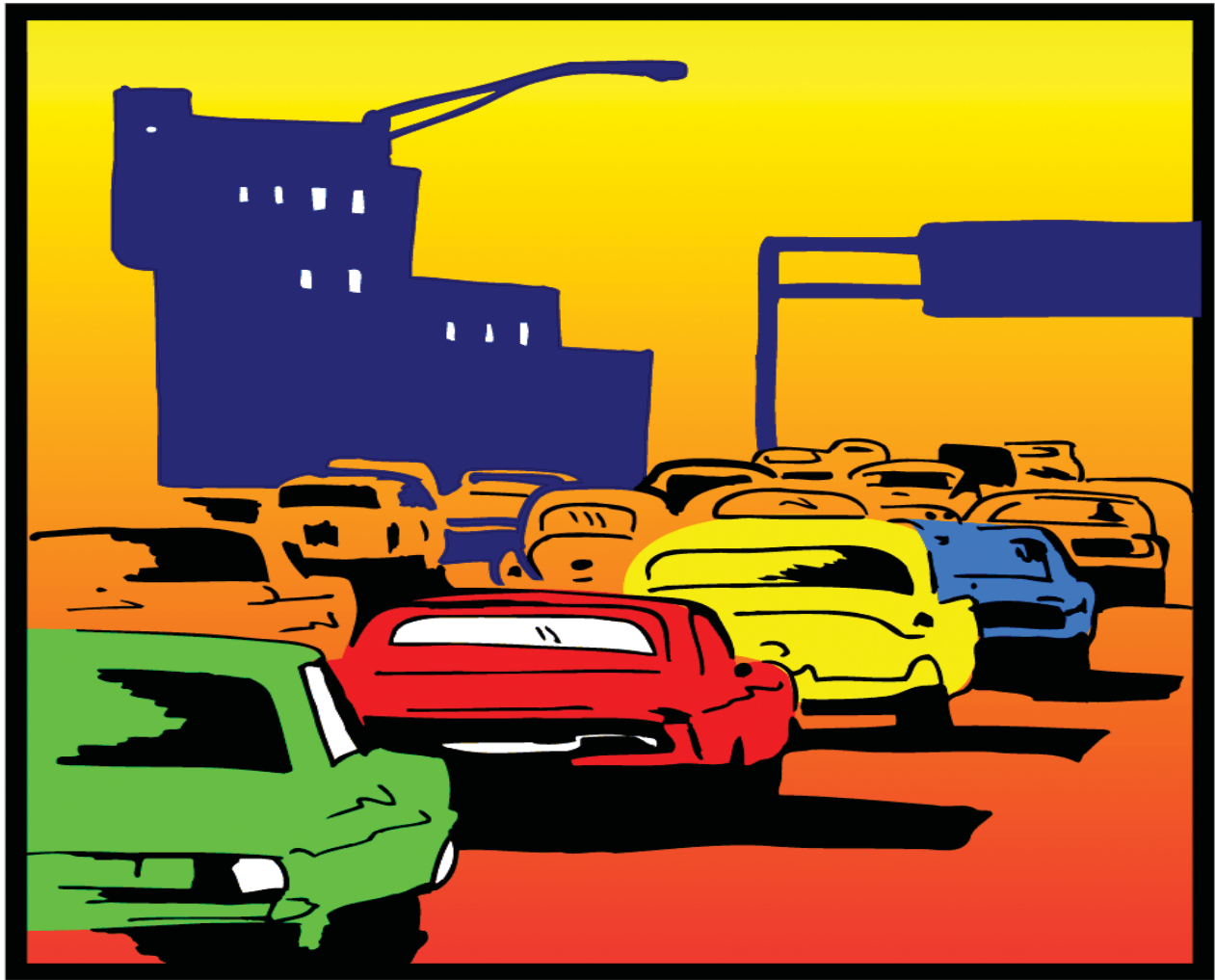


TRANSPORTATION



LET'S YOU LIVE
YOUR LIFE!

Transportation has been called the Rodney Dangerfield of government services. A daily part of everything we do, it often “gets no respect.” But transportation is important because it lets YOU live YOUR life ... HOW you want, WHERE you want, and WHEN you want. At Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT) we know that transportation is essential to the well being of every Floridian. Here are some reasons why:



Doug Callaway

- 1. Congestion** – Delays caused by congestion on our highways, at our airports, and in our public transportation facilities rob us of the most valuable commodity any of us have ... TIME. Congestion means missed business opportunities, increased operating costs, and lost time that could have been spent with families, friends and loved ones.
- 2. Safety** – Crowded and overused roads, buses, planes and trains are not going to be as safe as they could and should be. In a state like Florida where 18 percent of our population is over the age of 65, increasing safety for older drivers – and for every driver – must be a top priority.
- 3. Economic Benefits** – Florida’s highways, airports, seaports, trains and transit systems carry ALL of our manufactured goods. From the mail we receive on our doorstep to the shirt on our back ... from the shoes on our feet to the books in our children’s school ... from the computer in our office to the medicine on

the shelves of our local pharmacy, transportation brings it all to you. Transportation really “drives” Florida’s economy.

If you think about it our quality of life, our children’s future, and the success of our entire economy is “riding” on Florida’s transportation system. Simply put, TRANSPORTATION MAKES EVERYTHING ELSE POSSIBLE!

Yet, as important as transportation is, during the 2003 Florida Legislative Session \$200 million was diverted from the Transportation Trust Fund. This action not only broke faith with the motoring public – who paid this \$200 million in the first place – but it directly contradicted information released by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) earlier this year.

In February, FDOT produced a study indicating that \$5.50 is generated for every \$1.00 invested in the department’s Five-Year Work Program. Then on March 4th, the

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department made public a draft report showing that an additional \$2.7 billion was needed each of the next 17 years – just to maintain current transportation conditions.

Taking \$200 million from the Transportation Trust Fund was not only the wrong thing to do from a principled standpoint, it also failed to make economic sense. As Groucho Marx once said, “Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies.”

The bad news is this \$200 million “raid” in 2003 may be just the beginning. It appears likely that the Florida Legislature will again seek to play “piggy-bank politics” with the Transportation Trust Fund in 2004. That can’t be allowed to happen! The importance of transportation to Florida must be made plain to the public, the media, and the politicians – but in new and persuasive ways. We need to “connect” transportation to the quality of every Floridian’s life.

Business leaders and average citizens across Florida should meet with every member of the Florida Legislature now to clearly communicate our opposition to million dollar raids from Florida’s Transportation Trust Fund.

Transportation advocates must choose to proactively “sell” the real benefits of transportation to the public. Those supporting education funding would never confine their arguments strictly to the number of jobs created during construction of a school building, so why must transportation advocates? The REAL benefits of transportation – personal freedom, safety, economic opportunity, mobility, and more – far surpass the short-term increase in construction jobs.

In 1999, the Florida Chamber of Commerce’s “Transportation Cornerstone” report provided the policy impetus for enactment of Governor Bush’s Mobility 2000 initiative the following year. What was true in 2000 is still true today ... transportation makes dollars and sense for Florida. It truly makes Florida work!

Our state is blessed with a unique location and is poised to take advantage of the emerging markets of Central and South America in the 21st Century. But, as Ohio Governor Bob Taft said earlier this year when he proposed increasing transportation spending in his state, “a good location

without good access is a prescription for decline.” The same is true of Florida.

So, the handwriting on the wall is clear and unmistakable. Failure to act now will not eliminate the transportation needs confronting our state; it only allows them to grow even larger. As the old saying goes, “Tomorrow morning comes whether you set the alarm clock or not.”

Florida’s future is literally at a transportation crossroads. One road leads to prosperity, freedom and a better tomorrow. The other leads to greater traffic congestion, economic decline, and the kind of problems we see in California today.

What do we want OUR future to look like? Which road will WE take? The choice is OURS.

Doug Callaway serves as president of Floridians for Better Transportation.

