



“Talking Points”

Earlier this year \$200 million was “redirected, raided, diverted or swept” from the State Transportation Trust Fund. These funds did not come from general revenue, but were collected from transportation “user fees” -- gasoline taxes and tag fees -- and did not contribute one dime to the state’s budgetary problems. These are taxes paid by the traveling public in Florida for a very specific purpose -- **transportation** maintenance and improvements. To use them for any other purpose is simply wrong and only serves to further verify the public’s distrust of politicians. The following talking points provide five reasons not to “raid” the Trust Fund in 2004.

1.) KEEP THE “TRUST” IN THE TRUST FUND!

The word “TRUST” in the State Transportation Trust Fund should stand for Transportation Revenues **Used Strictly for Transportation**. That’s why the TRU\$T Coalition* is encouraging Governor Bush and Legislators to keep the “trust” in the Transportation Trust Fund by not supporting another Transportation Trust Fund “raid” in 2004.

From the historic California recall of Governor Gray Davis to the recent failure of the Mobility 20/20 campaign effort in Orlando, a generic distrust of government played a prominent role in the outcome of each election. Governor Bush and Florida Legislators now have not only an opportunity, but also an obligation to begin **rebuilding the public’s trust by not diverting transportation dollars** – gas tax revenues – away from the Transportation Trust Fund.

2.) TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS = ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT!

According to a report released by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in February:

- “Investments made by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) through the adopted work program will have a significant impact on Florida’s economy.
- Business benefits over the next 25 years will result in an increase of \$44 billion in personal income for Florida residents and generate 88,000 new permanent jobs.
- Direct benefits for personal travel, including reduced travel time, vehicle operating costs, and accidents, are estimated to be \$74 billion.
- Together, **these benefits yield \$5.50 for each dollar invested.** (Emphasis added).

Based upon the \$5.50 figure cited by FDOT, another \$200 million “raid” would cost Florida’s economy \$1.1 BILLION!

3.) MAKE DRIVING SAFER ... FOR EVERYONE!

In July of this year, TRIP (The Road Information Program) released a report showing that **Florida leads the nation in deaths for older drivers**. In 2001, some **268 Florida drivers over the age of 70 were killed in traffic accidents** in our state.

We must never forget that each one of those 268 older drivers was someone's mom or dad, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, grandmother or grandfather. That's why it is imperative that another multi-million dollar "diversion" from the Transportation Trust Fund be prevented in 2004.

The good news is that **transportation improvements made to assist Florida's older drivers also make the driving experience safer for ALL Florida drivers**. Clearly, it is time for this generation to improve the safety of highways built by their parent's generation.

4.) REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION!

On September 30th, the annual Urban Mobility Report, published by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) at Texas A&M University, was released and it showed that:

- traffic congestion levels in 75 urban areas have increased costing these communities **\$69.5 billion each year** in lost productivity and wasted fuel.
- **Florida had the most congested cities in the top 58 urban areas** listed.
- **Drivers in Orlando waste more time in traffic than do New York City drivers!**

Delays caused by congestion rob us of the most valuable commodity any of us has ... TIME. Congestion means missed business opportunities, increased operating costs, and lost time that could have been spent with families, friends, and loved ones. That's why it is imperative that another multi-million dollar "diversion" from the Transportation Trust Fund be prevented in 2004.

5.) HELP FLORIDA GET 95% BACK!

On September 30th, Governor Bush joined the governors of 14 other "donor states" in writing transportation leaders in Washington, D.C. urging them to **increase the minimum guaranteed funding level to 95 percent** during TEA-21 Reauthorization. The existing federal transportation law, known as TEA-21, was due to expire on that date, but has been extended for five additional months. It is absolutely **essential that Florida receive a 95% return**.

However, taking millions away from the State Transportation Trust Fund **at the same time** we're trying to get a 95% return on our federal gas tax dollars **undercuts our Congressmen's efforts in Washington!** And worse still, **another "diversion" this year would actually HELP the Northeastern states that are getting our money** right now. Northeastern Senators would just love to shoot down our efforts for a fairer share (95%) by citing how the State of Florida itself was "diverting" our own transportation dollars **away** from our Transportation Trust Fund.

** The TRU\$T Coalition is comprised of a variety of Statewide organizations including, but not limited to:*

Floridians for Better Transportation, Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Transportation Builders Association, Florida Ports Council, Florida Airports Council, Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers, Florida Public Transportation Association, Florida Trucking Association, Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council, Asphalt Contractors Association of Florida, AAA Auto Club South, 1000 Friends of Florida, Trade and Transport Council, Florida Concrete & Products Association, Florida Limerock & Aggregate Institute, Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association, and the Association of Florida Community Developers.