



Florida's transportation system is the backbone of our economy and is essential to our traveling safety, quality of life, and future economic vitality. The business community understands the importance of transportation. That's why the Florida Chamber Foundation, in its "*Transportation Cornerstone*" and "*New Cornerstone*" reports, state that good transportation is the key to Florida's economic future.

However, Florida is facing a huge transportation funding crisis! Our economic future is in serious jeopardy. According to the FDOT, an additional \$2.7 billion is needed each year just to "*maintain*" current transportation conditions. If we expect the benefits of our transportation system to continue, then we've got to adjust transportation funding for Florida in 2005. NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!

Key Facts

Safety - Regrettably, Florida leads the nation in deaths for older drivers. In 2001, 268 Florida drivers over the age of 70 were killed in traffic accidents in the Sunshine State.

Congestion - In a survey earlier this year, getting caught in traffic was the #1 most hated item -- ranking higher than visiting the dentist or going shopping on the busiest day of the year! Florida has 8 of the most congested U.S. cities and Orlando drivers waste more time in traffic than do New York City drivers!

Economic Benefits - Florida's transportation industry employs 202,000 workers and accounts for an annual payroll of \$6 billion. Each dollar invested in transportation yields a \$5.50 benefit to Florida's economy, and 47,500 new jobs are created by every \$1 billion spent on transportation.

Solutions

First, it must be understood that NOT ALL "TAXES" ARE THE SAME. Transportation "user fees" are different than general taxpayer dollars. User fees provide a time-honored and fiscally responsible way of funding a legitimate function of limited government. Transportation investments, just like defense spending, have long been a part of America's ongoing effort to "provide for the common defence" and "promote the general Welfare" mentioned in the U.S. Constitution.

We must find the additional transportation means necessary to maintain our amazing quality of life. At the State Level, a menu of transportation funding options should be carefully considered during the 2005 Legislative Session. These might range from local options for enhanced transportation funding to statewide solutions like long-overdue adjustments to some state transportation user fees.

The choice is simple: ignore our looming transportation funding crisis and end up like California, or take steps now to keep Florida moving and growing, and our economy on the right track. The TIME to act is NOW ... and the CHOICE is OURS!

FBT - Your "Voice" for Transportation!

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