

From: Rep. Bill Taylor, SC House District 86 <bill@taylorschouse.com>
To: Adams, ChaneyChaneyAdams@gov.sc.gov
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Subject: Pure Baloney Part II

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Pure Baloney! Part II

Dear Friends:

In my newsletter last Friday, I reported on the House vote to amend the Senate's bill to reform SCDOT. Our vote brought much wailing by the governor and many senators who wanted the House to just rubber stamp the senate plan claiming our amendment "killed" reform.

My response last Friday was straightforward. I wrote: "That's pure baloney!" Well, it didn't take long for objective observers of the legislature to see it the same way I do.

Pure Baloney - Part II

The **Times & Democrat's** headline stated: **House had a right to cry foul on roads plan**. In part, they wrote:

"The S.C. House should stand its ground in the debate over road repairs, even though the governor and Senate leaders are saying representatives' 113-6 vote to alter the plan sent to them by the upper chamber spells the death of the legislation for another year.

The Senate plan uses money that many lawmakers had stated would be used for other priorities, including education and local government.

The funding level approved by the Senate may or may not be available in coming years, depending upon economic conditions.

Handing control of the SCDOT to the governor, with approval by the Senate of commissioners, takes away any House role in agency governance."

[Read complete news story](#)

Cincy Ross Scoppe's commentary in The State newspaper was entitled: SC road bill dead? That's up to the Senate. She wrote, in part:

"Reports of the road bill's death have been greatly exaggerated.

Gov. Nikki Haley has been warning for weeks that the House would kill what once was a road-funding bill if it did anything other than swallow the Senate's deeply flawed plan whole. And when House leaders unveiled their plan on Tuesday, she ran to her Facebook page to announce the death.

It left me with a very different conclusion: The House gave itself some negotiating tools, to increase the chance that the Legislature will be able to reach a compromise that finally enacts the smart reforms to the Transportation Department that the Legislative Audit Council just reminded us we so desperately need.

...Anyone who actually wants to see the Transportation Department finally reformed ought to be ecstatic.

It's obvious why Gov. Haley would exaggerate the plight of the road bill: She wants to make sure the Legislature does not raise the gas tax, and the Senate's faux funding plan allows her to claim there's no longer a need for that. It's obvious why senators would parrot the governor: They need to deflect the criticism that will come if they actually do leave the bill for dead.

But none of us should be fooled by this death talk: The road bill is very much alive right now.

Yes, it still could die. And there are many ways it could be killed. But at this moment, only the Senate has the power to kill it. And that is what the Senate will do if it adopts Gov. Haley's position that the House has no right to play a role in writing state law."

[Read complete commentary](#)

Time for the Senate to Vote

It's now up to the Senate. The House amended bill will be on the Senate's calendar this week.

Please write or call your senator today and ask them get serious about reforming SCDOT.

At the end of the day, South Carolinians want progress on this issue and repairing our crumbling infrastructure starts with SCDOT reform.

In my view, it's "Reform First, Fund Second." That way we can all have more confidence that the hundreds of millions of additional dollars we will be sent to fix our state's roads will be used efficiently.

In your Service,

Bill Taylor

803-270-2012

Representative

South Carolina General

Assembly

Bill@taylorschouse.com

www.Taylorschouse.com

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Bill Taylor for SC House District 86, P.O. Box 2646, Aiken, SC 29801

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