

From: Ed DeVilbiss
Sent: 5/22/2015 12:29:29 PM
To:
Cc:
Subject: Needed: A Little Thought Before Raising Taxes to 'Fix Our Roads'

Friends,

I know many of you read THE NERVE but clearly few of our legislators are paying attention to the message. For one, Senator Tom Davis is trying to do something about it, and there may be a few more I am not aware of. We need to block the gas tax increase until we restructure the process of distributing funds to maintain roads and assign responsibility for each road's maintenance to the appropriate level of government. My last email included Tom's Editorial in the 5/20/15 Island Packet. If you missed it another is attached. note: you may need to rotate it 90 degrees to read it more easily.

The latest NERVE update shows Senators. Shane Martin (R-Spartanburg), Tom Davis (R-Beaufort), and Kevin Bryant (R-Anderson) making a logical appeal to find existing funds to apply to the road problem. This does not solve the allocation problem of which roads get maintained, but it is a step in the right direction and not a tax increase. As voters please communicate with your own Senate and House members so that they won't forget over the summer to fix the major problem of allocation procedures when the next session convenes. Please feel free to share this email with them.

ED

MY LAST NERVE: As Session Winds Down, Actual Debate Begins

by Jamie Murguia <<http://thenerve.org/reporters/JamieMurguia/>>
<<https://plus.google.com/u/0/104534919301116010728/posts?rel=author>>
May 22, 2015, 6 a.m.

<http://thenerve.org/media/cache/14/bd/14bded73473d7d8e7a00dbe8e5bcd969.jpg>

TIME'S ALMOST UP, AND WE JUST GOT TO THE GOOD PART

When debate began Wednesday on the state's Capital Reserve Fund bill,

several senators put up an amendment on the roughly \$85 million appropriation bill that would redirect a majority of the funds from higher education projects to the state's infrastructure system.

The Capital Reserve Fund, as its name suggests, is supposed to be for urgent capital projects, but in practice it's a slush fund for politically significant boondoggles. This year, however, Sens. Shane Martin (R-Spartanburg), Tom Davis (R-Beaufort), and Kevin Bryant (R-Anderson) want the legislature to use the Fund for roads instead of pork. What capital need in this state could be greater, after all, than our infrastructure system? The majority of lawmakers seem okay with raising taxes on South Carolinians and directing that money to roads – or at least to a broken road funding system – so they ought to at least consider a plan that would accomplish the same thing (albeit with less money) without raising taxes.

Right? Wrong.

On Wednesday, after just a couple hours of debate on the bill, Sen. Larry Martin (R-Pickens) made a procedural move to sit Sen. Davis down and end debate not just on the amendment but on the entire bill. The motion failed 7 to 33. Had it passed, the Senate would only have been able to debate the amendments already filed and then take a final vote on the bill. Which would have been unfortunate, since this was the first bona fide debate senators have had on the biggest issue of the year, road funding.

The Senate had already given second reading to the Capital Reserve Fund bill earlier in the month. In a rush to get to the many "important" bills awaiting debate on the calendar, senators voted to give it second reading (which ordinarily means the bill passes) on the understanding that members would be allowed to offer amendments on third reading (ordinarily a formality).

And yet some senators, led by Sen. Martin, still tried to end debate on the bill – one that would most certainly have ended any debate on sending existing revenue to our transportation system ahead of any potential tax increase.

So on Thursday (the Senate had adjourned on Wednesday), Sen. Davis led several hours of debate on the amendment to send existing revenue – and potential surplus revenue – to the transportation system. This debate revealed that many of our legislators have no idea how our current transportation dollars are spent. It revealed, too, that several of them don't believe that the transportation funding system as it exists today can ensure that new revenue resulting from a tax increase would actually be spent on repairing and maintaining roads that need it most.

Lawmakers have frittered away almost the entire 2015 session – and South Carolina's legislative session, remember, is among the longest in the nation – and accomplished nothing in the way of lasting, meaningful reform. So you can