



# View from the Chair

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

## Leaders on All Sides Step Forward To Advance '2+2+2+Indexing'

April 7, 2015



Dear Reader,

"Inaction is not an option." That is the message we have taken to the General Assembly as we sound the alarm concerning the potential loss of hundreds of millions of federal tax dollars paid by Missourians. Fortunately, Senator Doug Libla of Poplar Bluff, chair of the Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee, had a response – one that hangs on a plaque in his office – "Do It Now."

Senator Libla and his committee members took an important first step last week when they unanimously passed Senate Bill 540 which would raise the state fuel tax by two cents per gallon for three consecutive years, and then tie the future tax to the Consumer Price Index to guard against inflation.

Most significant is the manner in which SB 540 passed. It was unanimous with all committee Democrats and Republicans voting for it. Moreover, those senators represent both urban and rural interests as well as diverse geographic regions of our state. In an era where government is often plagued by gridlock, partisanship and parochialism; what a refreshing change. Full credit to these senators for their leadership on this issue and for taking the time to understand the problem and to advance a solution.

The "2+2+2+indexing" proposal now moves to the calendar for Senate floor debate which is expected to come in the next few days.

We've talked a lot about the gap we face in our funding situation beginning in 2017. We'll be \$160 million shy of having the resources to maintain our entire 34,000-mile highway system in the condition that it is in today. It's forced the Commission to make the painful decision to establish

"Missouri's 325 System" which prioritizes the use of our limited funds on just 8,000 miles of primary roads that connect our state east-to-west, north-to-south. Perhaps most significantly, the lack of state funds threatens \$167 million of federal funds in fiscal year 2017 (which starts in 14 months) and almost \$400 million in 2018 and each year thereafter.

2+2+2+indexing offers a simple way to close the gap. It would generate \$165 million for MoDOT and about \$71 million for cities and counties. This would enable MoDOT and the Commission to:

- Keep all of Missouri's roads and bridges in the condition they are in today, eliminating the need to move forward with "Missouri's 325 System,"
- Match **ALL** available federal transportation funds, keeping hundreds of millions of dollars that has been paid in federal fuel taxes by Missourians working for the improvement of our state highways – **not those of other states,**
- Lift the suspension of the city-county cost-share program, and
- Proceed with planning studies.

In addition, 2+2+2+ indexing would provide much needed revenue for cities and counties to share.

It's not a silver bullet to funding all of our state's transportation needs, but it does stave off the loss of precious federal dollars – an action that would be inexcusable if allowed to happen. We're anxious for the full Senate to take the next step in advancing this critical legislation because the 2015 legislative session is entering the home stretch. It ends on May 15.

Let's urge our legislators to follow the lead of their colleagues. The time for action is now.

Let's get going!

Stephen R. Miller  
Chairman

If you would like to communicate with the Commission, you can always reach us at [MHTC@modot.mo.gov](mailto:MHTC@modot.mo.gov). If you would like to read previous issues of the "View," you can find them on the MoDOT website: <http://www.modot.org/ViewFromTheChair/index.htm>

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