



2019 Mid-Session Legislative Report Missouri Limestone Producers Association March 20, 2019

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING - Despite the defeat of Proposition D at the ballot box last November, transportation funding continues to be a top topic of discussion in the Missouri Legislature. In January, Governor Parson announced a bonding plan in the amount of \$350 million to repair or replace a list of bridges that were already approved in MoDOT's [Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan](#) (STIP). This in turn would free up monies to be used on other projects, several of which could be eligible for federal match monies that could generate additional funding for transportation. In response to the Governor's proposal, Senate President Pro Tem Dave Schatz filed [SCR17](#) and House Transportation Chairperson Becky Ruth filed [HCR26](#) to authorize the Office of Administration to execute the financing agreement and make payments on the bonds.

On March 6th the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Representative Cody Smith announced an alternative plan that would do something that has never been done before in modern Missouri history, use \$100 million of general revenue for road and bridge repairs. The \$100 million is located in [House Bill 4](#) and will most likely be heard on the House Floor sometime between March 25-29, where the bill will then go to the Senate. Senator Schatz has expressed concern that using general revenues is not a consistent stream of funding for transportation and could result in Missouri losing out on potential grant dollars from the Federal level of government.

"Planning long term projects, we are talking about a five-year strategic plan, we can't base it on the fact that we think funding might be there," said Schatz.

While debate continues over the Governor's proposal, several other transportation funding bills have been introduced.

- [HB406](#) - Adjusts motor vehicle licensing and registration fees for inflation. Some of the motor vehicle registration fees have not been adjusted since the 1960's.
- [HB500](#) - Establishes a miles-per-gallon based motor vehicle registration fee to help offset the loss of revenue from increased fuel efficiency in modern and hybrid vehicles.
- [HB822](#) - Authorizes an increase in the tax on motor fuel by 2 cents a year until the motor vehicle fuel tax reaches 27 cents (current level is 17 cents per gallon)
- [SB190](#) - Requires a portion of sales and use tax revenue to be deposited into the State Road Fund
- [SB201](#) - Replaces the current motor vehicle registration fee system with a system based on fuel economy
- [SB430](#) - Increases the motor fuel tax by 2 cents a year for 3 years to 23 cents per gallon. Once fully implemented, the tax would be adjusted annually for inflation.

MINING ROYALTIES – Introduced by Senator Gary Romine ([Senate Bill 201](#)) and Representative Chris Dinkins ([House Bill 460](#)), this bill changes how federal mining royalties are distributed to counties. The

act rewrites Missouri law to state that federal royalties are transmitted to counties where the mining activity takes place. While the MLPA has not take a position on this bill, it is being watched as it could possibly be amended in a manner to affect MLPA members. Senator Romine's version has cleared the Senate Transportation, Infrastructure, and Public Safety Committee and the House version is waiting to be heard in committee.

GEOLOGIC RESOURCE FEES – [Senate Bill 84](#) and [House Bill 283](#) both extend the expiration date on geologic resource fees that are generated by surface mining permits. The current law is set to expire in December of 2020 and both bills extend that date to December 2025. The act does not change the current fee and Legislative Oversight has estimated that the fee currently generates \$186,000 annually on average for the Geologic Resources Fund.

MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTIONS – [House Bill 451](#) changes the limits on when a commercial vehicle inspection must be performed for the purpose of registration. Current law states that any commercial vehicle that is 5 years of age or less is not required to have an inspection. If passed, the bill will change that to 10 years or less or when the vehicle reaches 150,000 miles. If passed, the proposal is expected to cost the state roughly \$3.8 million in revenue. Those opposing the bill are the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers of Missouri and the Missouri Tire Industry Association. Supporters say that there are only 15 states that require inspections and that they do not prevent traffic fatalities.

VENUE & JOINDER – [Senate Bill 7](#) appears to be the best legislative chance to reform the issue of civil procedure regarding joinder and venue. The American Tort Reform Foundation ranked St. Louis as the #1 “judicial hellhole” in its [2016/2017 report](#). While recent legislative reforms have moved St. Louis to #3 on the list, venue shopping and improper joinder are still detrimental to the Missouri business climate. This legislation is designed to cut down on frivolous lawsuits and stop people from “shopping” for the best court district to get the largest payout. SB7 has cleared the Senate after numerous hours of debate and is currently scheduled for Executive Session in the House Judiciary on March 26th.

VEHICLE OPERATION AND CELL PHONE USE - [Senate Bill 15](#) extends the age from 22 to all ages regarding individuals who are prohibited from text messaging while driving and imposes fines on those operating a commercial vehicle. Violations committed while operating a commercial vehicle shall constitute a serious traffic violation for purposes of commercial motor vehicle license suspensions. There are 3 versions of this legislation in the House of Representatives as well. No legislation dealing with this issue has even been assigned to committee, therefore passage is highly unlikely at this point in session.

There are several other bills that MLPA staff are monitoring for involvement as necessary. For the entire list and current bill status which is updated weekly, please visit the [2019 Legislative Tracking](#) page on the MLPA website.