

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CONTACT: WALT RIKER  
(202) 224-5358

DOLE, MITCHELL PRESS HOUSE FOR FAIR HIGHWAY TREATMENT;  
FEDERAL DOLLARS FOR KANSAS AT STAKE IN "LEVEL OF EFFORT" ISSUE

WASHINGTON -- States such as Kansas that rely on funding sources other than fuel taxes and federal dollars to finance highway projects would get a boost under an approach urged by Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole (R-Kansas).

In a letter to Rep. Robert Roe (D-NJ), Chairman of the House Committee on Public Works & Transportation, Dole and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-ME) urged that the House of Representatives recognize a broad range of contributions states make to highway spending when computing federal highway assistance. Under the highway bill approved by the Senate last month, only the fuel taxes collected by states would determine their so-called "level of effort" used to calculate their share of federal highway dollars. The House has yet to debate the highway bill.

The letter followed Dole's successful effort to attach a resolution to the Senate bill calling on the conference committee that will determine the final bill to more accurately -- and fairly -- define a state's true level of effort.

"Kansas taxpayers provide a lot of money for Kansas highways, but not just from gasoline taxes," Dole said in a statement. "I don't want to see Kansas get shortchanged of precious federal highway funds because the formula doesn't give our state credit for our full level of effort. That's why I attached my Sense of the Senate resolution to the highway bill directing the House-Senate conferees to satisfactorily resolve the level of effort issue -- and that's why Senator Mitchell and I have followed up with this letter to keep the heat on the House."

In the letter, Dole pointed out that in Kansas just over 24% of total highway funding comes from the federal government, and fuel taxes account for less than 25%. The remainder of Kansas' highway funds are generated from other revenues, including sales taxes.

Dole also observed that not all states spend all of their fuel tax revenues on highway programs. "Examples of programs that states fund through motor fuel taxes include parks and recreation, arts, flood control, aeronautics and agriculture. All are worthy causes, but these diversions should not be rewarded under a true level of effort."

A redefinition of the level of effort would provide Kansas with a larger share of \$2.8 Billion in extra federal highway funds over the next five years. The level of effort issue will ultimately be resolved in a House-Senate conference committee, which will iron out the differences in the legislation already passed by the Senate and the bill yet to be approved by the House.

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