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## **Blue Ribbon Commission On Highways Finalizes Set Of Recommendations**

*Phase One Completed; Phase Two Will Involve Additional Studies*

Yesterday, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Highways held another meeting in Charleston, and the commission members completed work on its set of recommendations. Those recommendations, which now will be incorporated in a final report, will be approved formally at a final tele-meeting of the BRC. Following approval by the commission, the report will be submitted to Governor Tomblin...for his consideration.

Key recommendations of the BRC are:

- Raise a package of DMV fees to provide \$77 million more each year for the state Road Fund;
- Impose a new fee (\$100 to \$200 a year) on vehicles that use alternative fuels;
- Dedicate state consumers sales taxes collected on repairs and auto parts to provide \$25 million more each year to the state Road Fund; and
- Authorize the state Parkways/Turnpike authority to maintain tolls on the W.Va. Turnpike (which are set to expire in 2019) and finance \$600 million to \$1 billion in new bonds. The bond funds will allow the state Division of Highways to fund "expansion" projects across the state.

All of the recommendations will require legislative consideration and approval, but that timetable will be up to Governor Tomblin.

The completion of this report will conclude Phase One of the BRC's deliberations. Phase Two will involve several studies, and several of these will be noted in the final report. These studies will take place in 2014 and likely will cover these matters:

- Consideration of how to meet transportation's growing maintenance needs (more than \$100 million a year).
- Examination of other ideas on how to generate added efficiencies and savings from within the state Division of Highways.
- Study whether the state should consider a change to the state gasoline tax, including a possible repeal similar to what was done recently by the state of Virginia.

Other planned studies may examine the idea of a mileage tax based on how many miles a person drives and whether or not any added severance taxes (from increased natural gas production) could help fund transportation projects.

## **News Articles:**

### **Blue Ribbon panel goes with toll plan to finance future road work**

MetroNews, Sept. 19, 2013

<http://wvmetronews.com/2013/09/19/blue-ribbon-panel-goes-with-toll-plan-to-finance-future-road-work/>

### **\$1 billion road bond, increasing tolls among panel's recommendations**

The Charleston Gazette, Sept. 19, 2013

<http://www.wvgazette.com/News/201309190089>

### **Hefty toll hike possible for WV Turnpike**

***Turnpike fees could reach more than \$4 if new proposal passes***

Charleston Daily Mail, Sept. 20, 2013

<http://www.dailymail.com/News/201309200005>

## **W.Va. Transportation Video Available** **Video Highlights Benefits Of A Safe, Modern Transportation Infrastructure**

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Highways, in conjunction with the West Virginia Department of Transportation and West Virginians for Better Transportation, has created a four-minute video that highlights the positives and benefits from West Virginia's modern transportation system. The video highlights the investment and progress that has been made over the past 50 years. It also aims to educate viewers about key facts regarding our transportation system, the challenges it is facing and the need for a long-term funding solution. Click to view the video: <https://vimeo.com/74461538>.

"I encourage the partner organizations and companies of West Virginians for Better Transportation to copy the link to this video and to share this with their respective members, colleagues and friends," said Carol Fulks, WVBT's Chairperson. "This video is a good way to help put this issue in perspective."

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