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Congressman Rahall: All Options On Table For Road Money

(Editor's Note: Provided is a reprint of an article that was published in the Feb. 21, 2010 edition of The Register-Herald - http://www.register-herald.com/local/local_story_051224647.html)

As the revenue stream keeps getting smaller and states such as West Virginia view the future with anxious eyes, Rep. Nick Rahall says all options are on the table for putting money into the Federal Highway Administration — and that includes a higher tax on gasoline.

Before taking the annual Christmas break, Congress enacted a jobs bill that included a one-year extension of the transportation act that had expired three months earlier.

Included was the elimination of the mandatory state match for one year, although the proposal hasn't been dealt with in the Senate.

"That allows states to go ahead and do the road contracts they need to get under way to continue road maintenance," Rahall, D-W.Va., said in a meeting with The Register-Herald editorial board.

Not completed yet is the six-year reauthorization bill, and the reason is the question that is circulating from the states to Washington: How is the government going to finance it?

"We've had various studies recommended — gas tax increases, toll increases, public-private financing," Rahall said. "As far as I'm concerned, all options are on the table."

In West Virginia, financial woes have been outlined before a number of legislative committees. One bill before state lawmakers would expand the West Virginia Parkways Authority, now in charge solely of the turnpike, so that it could ultimately operate toll roads across the state.

Rahall said he feels American taxpayers realize the benefits of having a healthy federal highway budget, especially in West Virginia, which gets \$1.60 back for every \$1 motorists pay in the federal gas tax.

And that, in turn, spawns some jealousy directed toward West Virginia, he said.

At one time, West Virginia ranked in the top three of states in terms of the return from the FHA from the gas tax. "That's money coming back for much-needed projects for our infrastructure," Rahall said. "We know how difficult it is to build a mile of road in southern West Virginia versus a state like Florida. It's about \$24 million to \$26 million more per mile. And I know how other forms

of transportation that are not available to us are available to the big cities. We need this infrastructure if we're going to improve our economy in the southern part of the state."

2010 Construction EXPO To Provide Seminars On West Virginia's Transportation, Future

The 31st Annual WV Construction & Design Exposition will be held March 24-25 at the Charleston Civic Center, and the event will offer attendees with a wide range of seminars and exhibitors. Leading off the EXPO on the morning of March 24 will be this seminar: **"WVDOH Program: A Preview of the Next Six Years."**

The two-day event is open to all interested persons, and there is no charge to attend. But, pre-registration is strongly recommended. To pre-register, [please click here](#).

Approximately 6,000 people from across the United States came to EXPO 2009 to see new products, talk to knowledgeable exhibitors and attend valuable seminars -- most offer continuing education credit.

For more information, please go to: www.wvexpo.com.

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Special WVBT-EXPO Contest: Enter To Win An HDTV!



West Virginians for Better Transportation once again will give away a flat-screen HDTV to one lucky winner who is present at the 2010 West Virginia Construction and Design Exposition's EXPO. The drawing will take place during the EXPO's After Hours event on March 24, 2010, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Charleston Civic Center.

You must be at least 18 years of age and be present at the EXPO After Hours event on March 24, 2010 in order to win. Please read all rules before entering the drawing.

TWO WAYS TO ENTER:

1. Complete this on-line form: <http://www.keepwvmoving.org/getactive/hdtv.aspx>
2. Drop by the WVBT exhibit booth on the first day of EXPO to get an entry form.

The HDTV drawing is sponsored by The Manahan Group, Malone Consulting Services and Advantage Technology.

Help Support WVBT's Ongoing Efforts In 2010

Now more than ever WVBT needs financial support from coalition partners and companies. If your organization or company would like to help sustain the coalition's ongoing campaign or would like to get more information about West Virginians for Better Transportation, please send an email to info@keepwvmoving.org. Someone would be happy to contact you.

Remember -- even with recent successes, West Virginia still has massive unmet needs (\$2 billion) for bridge, roadway and highway maintenance and construction.

Need A Speaker?

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http://www.keepwvmoving.org/getactive/request_a_wvbt_speaker.aspx

For more information about West Virginians for Better Transportation, please go to www.keepwvmoving.org.

To opt out of this email system, please send your request to info@keepwvmoving.org.