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Florida Transportation Advocates Support Federal Plan to Reduce Deficit

FTBA Backs Commission's proposal to strengthen U.S. transportation network; increase user-fees

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - Today, the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, a bipartisan committee created by President Obama to address the nation's fiscal challenges, released a comprehensive plan to address a runaway federal deficit, while providing critical solutions to upgrade America's transportation infrastructure. Among other major issues including Social Security reform, the commission's fiscally-responsible plan, entitled "The Moment of Truth," revisits the current strength of federal transportation user-fees.

"Our state faces significant transportation challenges while our nation faces an ever-increasing debt," said Florida Transportation Builders' Association (FTBA) President Bob Burleson. "The Road Information Project estimates 47 percent of Florida's major urban highways are congested with 14 percent of the state's major roads in poor or mediocre condition. We support the commission's plan as it delivers critical transportation infrastructure resources while promoting economic growth through job creation – something Florida's communities desperately need. Further, this plan is a major step forward in means of getting our national debt under control and is critical for America's economic recovery."

As part of the overall plan, a 15 cents-per-gallon increase in the federal gasoline tax was included to help rebuild the nation's crumbling transportation system. As Americans fill up their tanks, revenues are generated from the federal gasoline tax and invested in highway and public transportation improvements across the country. However over the past 17 years, recent economic conditions have lost one-third of this tax's purchasing power without any user-fee adjustments to compensate for needed transportation resources.

"The adjustment to the federal gasoline tax and user-fee is the only alternative currently on the table to generate new revenues for transportation investments," continued Burleson. "The commission's plan identifies critical priorities that must be initiated by Congress to bring order to the nation's fiscal house. We urge Florida's elected federal officials to support this thoughtful proposal as it aims to rebuild the roads that will deliver economic relief and jobs to our state."

Each year, more than 16 million residents, 75 million visitors and 850,000 tons of freight travel on Florida's highways, roads and streets. In 2008, the American Society of Civil Engineers' report card for Florida's transportation infrastructure gave the state's highways a 'C' with drivers in Miami, Orlando and Jacksonville wasting more than 200 million combined hours and nearly 150 million gallons of fuel sitting in traffic, costing more than \$3.8 billion to the state's economy.

With the plan's release, the commission of 18 members will begin discussions and hold a vote on Friday to issue Congress and the White House an official proposal. Fourteen votes are needed to move the proposal forward. Even without a majority vote, the commission's recommendations are expected to be taken up by the Congress as they consider legislative solutions to address the nation's growing deficit. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

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