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SENATE BRIEFLY EYES HIGHWAY FUND INTEREST TO BOOST GENERAL

REVENUE: In an effort to generate additional money for the state's General Revenue Fund, the Senate this week considered a number of measures to divert money from special accounts, including several transportation funds, to the General Revenue Fund. One proposal would have transferred the interest earned by the Road Fund, Highway Fund, State Transportation Assistance Revolving (STAR) Fund and the Aviation Trust Fund to General Revenue. The proposal, a substitute bill offered in the Senate for House Bill 600, would have taken more than \$25.2 million from these accounts.

MoDOT believes the diversion of a majority of these funds would be unconstitutional because the state constitution says that road and highway funds are to be used only by the MHTC for the construction, maintenance and operation of the state highway system. MoDOT officials discussed those concerns with several Senators on April 29 when the bill was being debated. The substitute bill was not approved by the Senate, however, the issue may resurface as lawmakers continue to search for additional sources of revenue to offset some of the cuts made in the state budget in order to balance it.

The General Assembly is required by the constitution to pass a balanced budget by May 9. If the legislature does not approve a budget by the deadline, or the governor vetoes the budget bills, a special session would have to be called to address the budget issue.

After lengthy debate, House Bill 600, sponsored by Rep. Shannon Cooper, R-Clinton, was approved by the Senate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE APPROVES MOTOR CARRIER AND BIKE AND

PEDESTRIAN LEGISLATION: The House Transportation Committee approved a bill containing measures addressing commercial motor carrier registration and bicycle and pedestrian safety.

House Bill 725, sponsored by Rep. Gayle Kingery, R-Poplar Bluff, would place the registration of commercial motor carriers under the authority of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission instead of the Department of Economic Development. This change is a result of last year's reorganization that created the One Stop Shop for motor carrier services within MoDOT. The legislation establishes procedures to stagger the annual motor vehicle registrations on a quarterly basis.

House Bill 684, sponsored by Rep. Robin Wright Jones, D-St. Louis, was combined with House Bill 725, and addresses several highway safety issues. Under the legislation, bicycle lanes could

not be obstructed or driven on by motor vehicles except for law enforcement purposes. It also would require bicyclists and motorcyclists to exercise proper caution for pedestrians.

Under the legislation, motor vehicle drivers who intentionally, recklessly or negligently collide with a pedestrian, bicyclist or motorcyclist and causes personal injury could have points assessed on their driver's license and be held liable for damages.

The bill also establishes a 20-mile-per-hour state maximum speed limit within a school zone during the time school is in session and 30 minutes before and after the school day. City or county officials can impose a lower speed limit or longer school zone hours if deemed necessary for public safety. If the speed limit reduction is on a state or federal highway, the speed limit would have to be approved by the MHTC.

The bill now goes to the full House for debate.

COMMITTEE HEARS HOUSE MOVERS BILL: The House Transportation Committee held a public hearing on legislation that would tighten regulations for house movers. House Bill 727, sponsored by Rep. Larry Crawford, R-California, would make several changes in the licensing of house movers by the MHTC.

The bill would require:

- House movers to have a valid license issued by the MHTC;
- A person to be at least 21 years of age and have a valid class A commercial driver's license in order to obtain a house movers license;
- House movers to have motor vehicle insurance in an amount set by MDOT but not less than \$500,000 and a \$100,000 bond to cover any property damages resulting from the movement of the house; and
- A person to apply for a house movers license two weeks prior to the date of movement.

The legislation also would require a house mover to following an alternate route in the case of an emergency if directed by a public safety officer or MoDOT's chief engineer.

The committee took no further action on the bill.