

The Florida Senate
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Transportation Committee

BILL: SB 1964

INTRODUCER: Senator Webster

SUBJECT: Transportation - Enhanced Bridge Program

DATE: March 9, 2007 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Eichin	Meyer	TR	Favorable
2.			TA	
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

Senate Bill 1964 creates the Enhanced Bridge Program for Sustainable Transportation within the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to provide a funding mechanism to improve:

- Local bridges which are not on the State Highway System (SHS), and
- Highly congested roads on the SHS or local roads with high-cost bridges for the purpose of relieving congestion or providing an alternative corridor.

The program allows for state funds to be used to provide up to 50 percent of the project's cost and authorizes the expenditure of moneys from the State Transportation Trust Fund to fund the program. The bill also establishes a number of eligibility conditions for candidate projects. Bridge projects on regionally significant corridors connecting to the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) will receive preference.

This bill substantially amends s. 339.08, F.S., and creates s. 339.282, F.S.

II. Present Situation:

Bridge Inspection and Management Systems

Section 339.177, F.S., requires FDOT, in cooperation with metropolitan planning organizations and other affected governmental entities, to develop and implement a Bridge Management System to provide the information needed to make informed decisions regarding the proper allocation of transportation resources. Through the Bridge Inspection Program, each of the 6,200 state owned bridges, as well as an additional 4,000 bridges, are inspected every two years to identify which need preventative maintenance, minor or major repair work, or replacement. The Bridge Inspection Program identifies bridge deficiencies critical enough to endanger public

safety. Non-critical deficiencies are also identified. By correcting non-critical deficiencies, the structure's service life is lengthened, total maintenance costs reduced, and the public receives a better return on their investment. As a result of the inspections, engineers identify needs and make recommendations, which are recorded in the Bridge Management System. A bridge meeting FDOT standards is defined as not showing evidence of structural deterioration, not being limited by weight restrictions or not needing preventative maintenance. At least 90 percent of FDOT-maintained bridges must be kept at a level that meets these standards. Currently, approximately 93 percent of bridges meet the standards.

Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation

Section 144(g), 23 United States Code, requires states expend not less than fifteen percent nor more than thirty-five percent of federal bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds on bridges located on public roads not on Federal-aid highways (i.e. local and rural minor collector roads). Section 339.08, F.S., generally limits the expenditure of state funds off the SHS, except to match federal funds. FDOT's policy is to program bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds in the following manner:

- Federal bridge funds expended off Federal-aid highways will be limited to fifteen percent of available federal-aid bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds.
- Bridges on the SHS - Projects will be funded using state and/or federal funds. Structurally deficient bridges will be programmed for construction within six (6) years of deficiency identification.
- Bridges off the SHS, but on Federal-aid highways - FDOT may program up to twenty percent of the available federal-aid bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds. Funding priority will be based on the statewide bridge replacement ranking formula listing.
- Bridges off the SHS and off Federal-aid highways - First priority for funds will be for bridge inspection programs. FDOT may use any remaining funds for replacement and rehabilitation projects which have been prioritized for funding on the statewide bridge replacement ranking formula listing.

This program notwithstanding, numerous local bridges throughout the state require improvements which are often beyond the financing capabilities of the responsible local governments. As a result, congestion increases on the local corridor due to restrictions or limitations caused by structural deficiencies or capacity constraints of the bridge. This congestion can place stress on adjacent SHS corridors as drivers seek alternative corridors for travel.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 339.08, F.S., authorizing the use of State Transportation Trust Fund for the Enhanced Bridge Program created in s. 339.282, F.S.

Section 2 creates s. 339.282, F.S., Establishing the Enhanced Bridge Program within FDOT, providing program criteria, and a funding mechanism to improve:

- Local bridges which are not on the SHS, and
- Highly congested roads on the SHS or local roads with high-cost bridges for the purpose of relieving congestion or providing an alternative corridor.

State matching funds may be used to fund up to 50 percent of project costs. The bill authorizes the use of moneys from the State Transportation Trust Fund for eligible bridge projects.

The bill stipulates that a minimum of 25 percent of funding available for the program shall be allocated for structurally deficient local bridge projects having a sufficiency rating of 35 or below and average daily traffic of at least 500 vehicles. FDOT maintains a Local Government Deficient Bridge list which, as of March 2006, identified 232 deficient bridges. There are currently 24 bridges identified in the list which meet these criteria and are not currently funded for construction in the FDOT Tentative Work Program. The estimated construction cost for these 24 bridge projects is \$233.2 million.

The remaining percentage of the funding available for the program is to be allocated to reducing congestion on highly congested corridors on the SHS or local roads containing high-cost bridges. Eligible projects on these roads must:

- Improve congestion on constrained or backlogged corridors or provide congestion relief on an alternative corridor, and
- Involve a bridge project having an estimated cost of \$25 million or more.

FDOT does not have a comprehensive list of these high-cost bridges at this time.

Bridge projects on corridors connecting to the SIS identified as regionally significant in a regional transportation plan will be given highest preference.

Section 3 provides an effective date of July 1, 2007.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

No funds are appropriated by the bill. The bill authorizes the use of the State Transportation Trust Fund for the enhanced bridge program.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

This Senate Professional Staff Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

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