

by farmers, motorists, safety specialists and public officials who are calling for overhaul delapidated roads and elimination of safety hazards. January 17th edition of Business Week sited growing pressures to devote more money to road and bridge repair, and said "states are caught in the classic cost revenue squeeze in road construction and repair costs, which have more than doubled since '67, outpacing the 75 percent general inflation rate". Farm Journal in a January article "Why your roads are going to pot". "Count yourself luck is roads in your area are as good as they were a few years ago, most aren't". The Journal article told farmers "Today you may be faced with asking your state and local government to consider abandoning rural roads that aren't absolutely essential, and accumulating the money to rebuild and maintain rural roads that are considered critical to your area. In 1975 there were 7,327 wrecks blamed on bad roads". I've got reams of evidence and material to show this. The State Highway Department are doing the very best job that they possibly can with the funds that are available, but with the rising inflationary costs of highway repair, and not getting any money back from the federal government to take care of these situations, we do need to have this one-cent increase in the gas tax. I'll be glad to answer any questions. We had a study on this for a year. We've met with the State Highway Department. I would move that this bill be advanced from General File to E & R initial. Senator Kremer is supporting this bill. He asked for this other bill to move along with it, but I'm not familiar with that request. I know that part of the request was taken out of the bill to start with. I'll move the advancement of the bill.

PRESIDENT: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, I would waive any comments, except to say that I support the bill. I think it ought to go. We need the money. It is overdue. The Department of Roads has done a passable job with limited funds. I think we ought to have the bill.

PRESIDENT: Senator George...is not here. Senator Mills.

SENATOR MILLS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I am in support of the bill and in support of LB 139. The problem that arose, that I mentioned to you earlier, there were two different sections of the statutes involved in LB 139. If you look at the title of that you'll see one of them is Section 39, the other one, I believe, is Section 66. So it was a compromise to try and bring this bill out, instead of like this that there could have been, if it was passed, a challenge to the constitutionality of it and it probably would have thrown it out. So the Public Works Committee decided to strip a bill that was there and put in it the first two sections that were stripped by the committee amendment. I am very much in favor, as I said, of LB 139. There are a number of people around the state who are certainly in support of it, progressive Nebraskans, a number of counties which get, I believe, 23 percent of the money that would be derived from it, as well as the cities, those in Omaha, for example, would get 23 percent. So I think most people that are involved in this situation are in favor of 139. The problem that has been involved is the transfer of some roads. That was involved in LB 139. I think it needs to be talked about because our former State Engineer, Mr. Doyle, informed the Committee that unless LB 139 contained the transfer of roads, which is a mutual thing