

in the 20-year plan and that's where the Appropriations Committee begins to get that information about what is necessary and where those projects may be falling behind. For example, the Department of Roads has made great strides in completing the percentage of projects that they have planned and that's because they've been more efficient. Their staffing levels have remained constant, their administration of the Department of Roads in this state is amazingly low. It's like 5 percent. You look at administration of highway departments around the country and they're a lot, lot higher. We have a very efficient administration of that and they've been able to do that, and one of the reasons is the stability that we have in that fund. I think Senator Hall brings out a very good point. People need to understand that, yes, there is going to be a small fuel tax increase. Senator Robinson, and I don't see him, I don't see him eating, that was my first guess, but, no, anyway, for the average driver for every penny increase it's going to cost you about \$5. So if you go out, and having those projects, the average driver in the State of Nebraska for the next year is going to pay an additional \$5, the next year they're going to pay an additional 7.50, and that's going to be the cost...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: ...of the average driver in the State of Nebraska to do the fuel tax increase. It is an increase. Senator Hall is absolutely right to say that there's an increase. Understand that there may be, and you will have people who are going to talk about border bleeding, and that's a whole other issue but, again, that's from some of the retailers' part, also realize they're the ones that when the summer rates come and there are more people buying fuel, more people traveling, they're also the ones that raise their rates because more people are traveling. And so it's a real hard issue to say that, gee, this is going to hurt our sales because the price is going to go up. Then they shouldn't be raising, they should actually be lowering their prices when the large traffic times come. But, again, the variable tax rate is extremely important for stability and it also is the most inexpensive way to keep this fund going without having to have double the increase in the fixed rates. And, with that, I would be happy to answer any other questions.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Time. Senator Schrock.