

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 14, 2003

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the nation. You know, so we're the highest there also. So you know, we are spending a lot of money. But we are also collecting a lot of money. In this leaflet that you passed out, and some of the other information that I got, that 420 jobs would be lost for every \$10 million of less spending for road construction. So that...those 67-68 million dollars would equate to about 2,900 jobs that would be lost per year. This is a real impact. This is an economic impact. We're trying to raise money, and we're laying off people. I have a real problem with that. When we're laying people off, we need to try to develop more jobs for people. We need to create jobs. If we're laying these people off, what are they going to do? They're going to be on unemployment, and they're going to probably leave the state. And these are the things that we don't want. But those are the comments that I have. And I will continue to listen. But I am very strongly opposed to this amendment. Thank you. I'll return the balance of my time to the Chair.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuthman. Senator Bromm on the Thompson amendment.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Mr. President. And certainly think that this is a very, very serious proposal. And Senator Thompson, I know that you're just trying to do everything you can to solve our problem. And I do appreciate and respect that. I think, if we were to consider doing something like this, we would need to remind ourselves how we got to where we are with respect to the Roads Department. Some years ago, we were in some disarray in that department. We were having lots of variation in what was available. It was much more politically driven, in terms of our decisions. And the Legislature, certainly under Senator Warner's leadership, developed, I think, a system that is really tops as far as states in the entire country. We are, by the way, the ninth-highest in gas tax in the nation, and twenty-seventh, generally, on the average price per gallon at the pump. But we are ninth-highest in gas tax in the nation, Senator Thompson. Taking \$33 million at a shot out of the area where Senator Thompson is proposing to take it, which is kind of the end area after the variable tax has gone in, and so forth, is going to be a terrific impact on our roads construction projects. As Senator Baker pointed out, and