

House Republican Press Release

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REP. SCRIBNER: LEGISLATURE SHOULD CONSIDER GOVERNOR'S PROPOSALS FOR FISCAL RESTRAINT, TRANSPORTATION UPGRADES



Hartford—State Rep. David Scribner (R-Brookfield, Bethel) today said the Legislature should give consideration to budget and transportation proposals made by Governor M. Jodi Rell on Wednesday, February 6, the opening day of the Legislature's 2008 session.

In Governor Rell's budget proposal, she urged fiscal restraint, citing difficult economic times and the need to keep taxes in check.

"As 9-year Veteran of the Legislature's Finance Committee, I share the Governor's concerns for fiscal restraint," said Rep. Scribner. "Recognizing Connecticut is in sound financial condition but that like states throughout the country, we can no longer expect to enjoy large surpluses is extremely important as we move forward in crafting adjustments to the budget."

Rep. Scribner said Gov. Rell's transportation-related proposals are worthy of the Legislature's consideration and that as Ranking Member (House Republican Leader) of the Legislature's Transportation Committee, he will play a role in that process. The Governor's address outlined a number of transportation proposals including:

- Separating the Department of Transportation (DOT) into two agencies: The Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Transportation, Aviation and Ports. This separation is intended to create more efficient operation and focus of the respective agencies.
- Providing new staff for bridge safety and design
- Providing 100 new state troopers for traffic safety, 10 new inspectors for truck safety and speed camera radar operations on Interstate 95
- Provide new railcars for the Metro North and Shoreline East Commuter lines
- Development of the New Haven to Springfield Commuter Rail Line and Hartford-New Britain Busway
- Numerous congestion mitigation projects along I-95 and the state's other highways

Rep. Scribner noted potential benefits of dividing the current DOT into two agencies are twofold: The Legislature has made historic commitments to mass transit

but the state must have a more effective system of providing resources and expertise to implement the upgrades.

Also, DOT is currently more focused on road and bridge maintenance but the state lacks the infrastructure to move its much-needed mass transit initiatives forward. Rep. Scribner added that certain cutbacks to the DOT's workforce through the years have hampered its ability to carry out these changes.

“We have to have the management and manpower to take these projects from the design stage to reality,” said Rep. Scribner. “These proposals, which would have to go through the legislative process, have the ability to make dramatic changes to the way the state pursues transportation projects. Regarding mass transit, the greatest challenges are not only funding but encouraging its use by making it dependable, cost effective and convenient. By doing so, we could finally make some headway toward reducing traffic congestion in Connecticut.”

