

Gov. Otter allows \$320M road plan to become law

Dean Johnson and Associated Press , KTVB 6:15 PM. MDT April 11, 2017



(Photo: KTVB)

BOISE - Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter has allowed a nearly \$320 million transportation funding plan to become law despite lodging multiple criticisms against key aspects of the measure.

Otter announced Tuesday that he allowed the bill to become law because the risk of continuing to ignore the state's crumbling roads and bridges is too great.

The new transportation plan primarily uses bonds to pay for new road projects and repay it with future federal highway payments. However, the plan also includes funneling 1 percent of the state's sales tax revenue to fund other road projects.

Otter has previously opposed using sales tax dollars for road projects, arguing that transportation funds should not compete with education priorities.

READ: [The governor's letter in letting SB 1206 become law](https://gov.idaho.gov/mediacenter/Bills/S1206.pdf)
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The Idaho Transportation Board will decide where to best spend the new funding at next week's board meeting in Lewiston.

ITD spokesman Vincent Trimobli says they'll submit a number of projects to the board, including the widening of Interstate 84 between Nampa and Caldwell.

The board will then decide what project or projects will be funded.

"Whatever the board selects as projects for GARVEE or any of the new monies, we'll move as quickly as possible to put those projects into construction, that's what we did in 2004 with GARVEE, that's what we did in 2015 with the new revenue, and that's what we'll do here as well," Trimobli said.

ITD has said that stretch of Interstate 84 is one of their top priorities.

This past session Canyon County lawmakers agreed, pushing legislation that would address needs in that area.

"We are also going to hold ITD, kind of to, some of our discussions that said look we really do believe this is a high priority and we think that we're all on the same page there," Rep. Christy Perry, R-Nampa, said.

Perry calling Tuesday not only a win for Canyon County, but also for the entire state.

"It's a major economic corridor for the state, so like I said it really wasn't just a regional issue. This was a statewide issue," Perry said.

Idaho will pay back the money over time through federal transportation funds.

In Idaho, the governor has a small window to sign or veto bills. If the governor chooses to do nothing, then the bill automatically becomes law.



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