

PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

HB 25-FN-A, making appropriations for capital improvements. **OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT.**

Rep. David B Campbell for Public Works and Highways: The governor's capital budget, as submitted to the committee, authorized capital expenditures totaling 140.188 million dollars in general fund bonding, including the bonding of 83.701 million dollars for the state's contribution to local school building aid. The House capital budget, as unanimously recommended by the committee, authorizes 127.47 million dollars in general fund bonds, and leverages an additional 94 million dollars in federal match and grant monies over and above the budget as presented to the committee. This total is below the 130 million dollars general fund bonding capacity limit recommended by the state treasurer to the House.

The committee was unanimous in affirming a long-standing legislative policy that school building aid does not belong in the capital budget. To bond the full biennial payment of local school building aid would have consumed 2/3 of the general fund bonding capacity for the State of New Hampshire. School building aid payments by the state have tripled over the past ten years and, if left in the capital budget in the future, would eventually entirely eliminate the general fund bonding capacity for any state capital projects.

One of the top priorities of the committee in rewriting the capital budget was to keep the state's continuing commitment to fund biennially the renovation of two community career technical centers (formerly called vocational-technical centers), based on a priority list generated by the department of education. This year the top two high school districts are Governor Wentworth Regional in Wolfeboro and Littleton, which are allotted a total of 15.8 million dollars. The committee also funded additional critical maintenance projects for the post-secondary NH community college system, a new radiological training facility at NHTI in Concord and the purchase and renovation of a new building in Keene by adding a total of 6.5 million dollars.

The committee emphasized throughout this capital budget critical repair, renovation and construction projects that could be completed within the next two years. As amended, this capital budget expends over 150 million dollars in new construction projects in all 10 counties and in over 20 different communities throughout the state. The result of this added construction is, in fact, a 150 million dollar state-generated stimulus package that meets critical state capital construction needs and maximizes the capture and expenditure of federal dollars. By comparison, the recent federal stimulus program allocated 129 million dollars to New Hampshire for road and bridge work. As an additional criterion, the committee largely chose construction projects (from over 209 million general fund dollars in department requests) that either reduced state operating expenditures or produced additional revenue.

Some of the major new construction projects added by the committee include: A \$2.5 million state bond that brings in 51 million federal dollars for infrastructure and renovations at 11 municipal airports in Berlin, Wakefield, Lebanon, Laconia, Claremont, Keene, Concord, Nashua, Manchester, Rochester and Portsmouth; authorization of \$865,000 in state bonding to complete the land purchase in Pembroke for the Adjutant General, which will allow the construction of a 34 million dollar National Guard training center 100% funded by a Homeland Security grant. This facility will be used to train National Guardsmen from across the country; \$14.5 million to Hampton Beach State Park for a new hatch shell and bathroom complex, which is estimated to generate an additional \$2.6 million annually in direct state taxes, which does not include liquor and lottery sales or the local economic impact; a \$15 million renovation of the Tobey School at the Gallen Office Park in Concord which will allow the consolidation of state boards and offices; \$4.8 million for a new liquor

store in Nashua, on the existing Coliseum Avenue site, estimated to increase liquor sales by 25% or \$3 million per year; one million dollars in state-owned rail bridge repairs in Lebanon, Laconia and Concord; \$465,000 at the Dover Point DMV substation to enable a consolidation with the current Rochester facility; further consolidation of DMV facilities from Milford, Merrimack and Nashua, including the EZ-Pass Service Center, which will be accomplished by renovating the Welcome Center at Exit 6 in Nashua, while a small bus station will be built at the Exit 8 Park; and the 35 million dollar biennial funding of capital construction projects for the University of New Hampshire which continues to be funded per prior legislative authority (“KEEP”).

During the current economic recession, these construction projects will create jobs for dozens of small and large general contracting and building-related businesses and employ hundreds of workers throughout the state. The committee worked diligently to fairly spread these new and needed capital and construction projects throughout New Hampshire, “*from Coos to the Sea*” (\$67,000 in repairs for the 155 year old Tip Top building on the summit of Mt. Washington) (\$1 million for the Hampton Beach sea wall). **Vote 17-0.**