

★ THE TEXAS TRIBUNE
Festival
Sept. 27-29, 2013

REGISTER NOW for \$130

Save 40 percent off the walk-up
Discounted registration available for mem
students and educators.

Visit texastribune.org/festi



**WE PREPARE TEACHERS.
THEY CHANGE THE WORLD.**

UTeach Science & Math Teacher
Preparation Program

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

[Register](#) | [Login](#)

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Senators Hope to Revive Plan to Fund Roads

by [Aman Batheja](#) | May 28, 2013 | [2 Comments](#)

[Comment](#)

[Republish](#)

[Email](#)

[Tweet](#)

[Recommend](#)



[Enlarge](#)

graphic by: Bob Daemmrlich

TribLive at the Austin Club featuring State Rep. Jim Pitts and Sen. Tommy Williams on financial issues facing the 83rd Texas Legislature.

Two senators are hoping the [special session](#) that kicked off Monday evening will be an opportunity to create a serious fix for the state's transportation funding shortfall.

Senate Finance Chairman [Tommy Williams](#), R-The Woodlands, and Senate Transportation Chairman [Robert Nichols](#), R-Jacksonville, have filed a resolution that would ask voters to approve diverting some of the revenue that traditionally goes to the state's savings account into the state's highway fund.

"We've talked to Perry's office about it," Williams said. "They like it. I think they'll be very supportive

of it."

Last week, days before the end of the regular session, Williams [proposed the same plan](#) to House budget leaders, who were not receptive to considering it so late in the session.

Williams is now hopeful that Perry will add the issue to a special session agenda that so far only covers redistricting issues. At a news conference Tuesday, Perry did not rule out adding other issues to the special session agenda.

World Changers Shaped Here



"Unlike water for the last decade we have addressed transportation so there's been some important movement in the transportation side," Perry said. "Is it enough, from my perspective? No, but, again, I think it's a little bit premature, with less than 24 hours since we've called this special, to be addressing whether we're going to be adding anything to the call or not."

The Texas Department of Transportation has said it needs \$4 billion in extra revenue this session just to maintain current congestion. During the regular session, it received \$400 million in extra funding to the state's highway fund for the next two-year budget cycle.

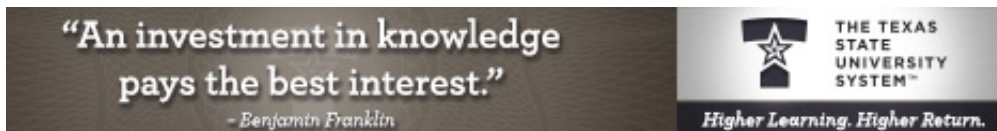
The state's Rainy Day Fund is currently drawing billions of dollars a year from oil and gas production taxes. Under [Senate Joint Resolution 2](#), filed by Nichols and Williams, half of the fund's future revenue would go to address road construction and maintenance around the state. Williams estimated that the plan would raise nearly \$1 billion of extra revenue for TxDOT annually.

"I think it's a fairly reliable and robust way to fund our highways," Williams said. "It does it in a financially responsible way and wouldn't have a detrimental effect on the budget."

Republican critics are sure to question whether the plan jeopardizes the state's financial stability. Throughout the regular session, Perry and Republicans in the House expressed concern about drawing too much from the Rainy Day Fund, which was projected to grow to nearly \$12 billion by 2015 if lawmakers had left it alone. They ultimately approved measures spending \$3.9 billion from the fund, leaving about \$8 billion under current projections. Under Williams and Nichols' plan, the fund's projected balance falls to \$7 billion in 2015, Williams said.

"There is no magic number you have to have in there," Williams said. "Six to \$7 billion. I'm good with that."

Ross Ramsey, Emily Ramshaw and Jay Root contributed to this report.



Texas Tribune donors or members may be quoted or mentioned in our stories, or may be the subject of them. For a complete list of contributors, click [here](#).

Comment	Republish	Email	Tweet	Recommend
---------	-----------	-------	-------	-----------

RELATED CONTENT

No related articles found

RELATED TRIBPEDIA

- [Robert Nichols](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Rainy Day Fund](#)

83rd Legislative Session

Tommy Williams

Budget

[↑ Back To Top](#)

Sign up for Texas Tribune alerts

Get daily coverage delivered to your inbox

[Recommend](#)

5 people recommend this.

NEW ON THE TRIB

Senators Hope to Revive Plan to Fund Roads

by [Aman Batheja](#)

38 minutes ago (2)

Perry Hails Water Bill, is Evasive on His Future

by [Jay Root](#)

an hour ago (3)

Mostyn Announces \$135 Million TWIA Settlement

by Chris Hooks

an hour ago

Inside Intelligence: About The 83rd Legislature...

by [Ross Ramsey](#)

3 hours ago



READ MORE

KNAUPE G R
GREGG KNAUPE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Dedicated to helping clients create, change, or protect public policy.

Shared

Viewed

Commented

Log In

Log in to Facebook to see your friends' recommendations.



Updated: Bill Would Grant HHSC Power to Address Medicaid Reform, by Becca Aaronson

22 people recommend this.



Video: At Rally, Texans Urge Lawmakers to Expand Medicaid, by Justin Dehn and Alana Rocha

37 people recommend this.

PRESENTED BY:
The University of Texas at Austin

