

House

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considered by the roads and transportation committee.

Frizzell and Rep. Woody Burton believe the House likely will split the two projects in the bill, which as it stands now would allow a private company to build, maintain and collect tolls on the Indiana Commerce Connector through central Indiana and the Illiana Expressway in northwest Indiana.



BAUER

Speaker Pat Bauer, D-South Bend, has said he doesn't believe representatives will split the bill.

"Everyone is upset. It's not nailed down where this is going to go, and it affects a lot of people," Frizzell said.

A third local legislator, Rep. Ralph Foley, said he hasn't had time to look at the bill or the amendments proposed by the Senate.

His legislative assistant has been taking and keeping track of calls from his constituents about the issue so he can consider their input when the bill comes before the House, he said.

Frizzell said the House could decide to send the central Indiana toll road to a study committee and move the Illiana



STAFF PHOTO BY JOSHUA MARSHALL

Sen. Beverly Gard, R-Greenfield, talks about a proposed bill that would allow the state to build a toll road

through central Indiana during Senate debate Monday. The bill passed 36-13. At right is Sen. Tom Wyss.

Expressway forward.

Burton believes the committee that first reviews the bill will propose an amendment, similar to one proposed in the Senate, that would send the central Indiana toll road to a study committee for at least one year.

If the committee does not propose the change, Burton said he would strongly consider proposing it himself and asking the committee to study a more detailed route,

costs and the environmental impact.

Burton also would like the House to add a requirement that the projects come back to the legislature for another approval after studies are completed and the state starts negotiating a lease with a private company.

Even if both of those are added, the bill doesn't have the best chance of passing, he said.

"I think it's got a 50/50 chance

of passing if it has legislative oversight," said Burton, a Republican who represents parts of Whiteland, Franklin and Greenwood.

He wants more information before he will approve the bill.

"I'm not opposed to the concept. I've been opposed to the plan and how they want to do it," Burton said.

Rep. Matthew Whetstone, who is a sponsor of the bill in the

HOW THEY VOTED

Senators voted 36-13 Monday to pass a bill proposing the Indiana Commerce Connector and the Illiana Expressway. Here is a breakdown of who voted for and against the bill. The names of senators who represent parts of Johnson County are in bold:

For the bill

- Ronnie J. Altling, R-Lafayette
- Vaneta Becker, R-Evansville
- Phil Boots, R-Crawfordsville
- Anita Bowser, D-Michigan City
- Richard Bray, R-Martinsville**
- Bob Deig, D-Mount Vernon
- Mike Delph, R-Carmel
- Gary Dillon, R-Columbia City
- Jeff Drozda, R-Westfield
- Sue Errington, D-Muncie
- David Ford, R-Hartford City
- Vic Heinold, R-Kouts
- Brandt Hershman, R-Wheatfield
- Glenn Howard, D-Indianapolis
- Robert Jackman, R-Milroy
- Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville
- Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn
- Timothy Lanane, D-Anderson
- Sue Landske, R-Cedar Lake
- Connie Lawson, R-Danville
- David Long, R-Fort Wayne
- Teresa Lubbers, R-Indianapolis

- Robert Meeks, R-LaGrange
- James Merritt Jr., R-Indianapolis
- Ryan Mishler, R-Bremen
- Frank Mrvan, D-Hammond
- Johnny Nugent, R-Lawrenceburg
- Allen Paul, R-Richmond
- Marvin Riegsecker, R-Goshen
- Brent Steele, R-Bedford
- Karen Tallian, D-Portage
- John Waterman, R-Shelburn
- Thomas Weatherwax, R-Logansport
- Thomas Wyss, R-Fort Wayne
- Michael Young, R-Indianapolis**

Against the bill

- Jean Breaux, D-Indianapolis
- John Broden, D-South Bend
- Beverly Gard, R-Greenfield
- Lindel Hume, D-Princeton
- James Lewis, D-Charlestown
- Patricia Miller, R-Indianapolis**
- Vi Simpson, D-Bloomington
- Connie Sipes, D-New Albany
- Tim Skinner, D-Terre Haute
- Greg Walker, R-Columbus**
- Brent Waltz, R-Greenwood**
- Richard Young Jr., D-Milltown
- Joseph Zakas, R-Granger

Did not vote

- Samuel Smith Jr., D-East Chicago

House, said he has heard from lawmakers who support and oppose the bill.

"If they can give it a fair shake, hopefully we can make the case that it will only benefit Indiana," said Whetstone, a Republican who represents part of Hendricks County.

A House committee likely will not consider the bill for a few more weeks, he said.

Whetstone said he hasn't talked to legislators about the bill

because he has been focusing on other issues in the House. He has heard some lawmakers talk about the proposal, but he said he doesn't know how much support it has.

"Right now, it's just people talking on the street," he said.

Frizzell and Foley said they don't know what, if any, amendments they might propose and need more time to review the bill and what was proposed and approved by senators.

Letter

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

Council members should instead start contacting their state legislators and letting them know what the people want, West and council member Josh McCarty said.



Canary suggested doing both.

The council decided to draft a letter that would include everyone's opinion and ask questions, including how the beltway would financially impact the county, for a more defined route and whether the county will be responsible for emergency services on the beltway.

Council members said the letter could serve as a voice for the community, letting lawmakers know that the people of Johnson County have said they are not in support of the toll road.

"We can say whatever we want, do whatever we want, but we're not going to have any effect on (the beltway)."

Ron West
Johnson County council member on how he thinks making a statement against the beltway wouldn't work since the council has no say in the project

"We are an extension of the people in the county. From what I see right now, they don't want it," said council member Steve Hollenbeck.

Hollenbeck, McCarty, Price, West and Canary said they could not support the project with the information they have now.

"If it's not going to be a benefit for Johnson County, I don't foresee any reason we can support this. I see no benefit for Johnson County the way it's proposed," McCarty said.

Council members Anita Knowles and Beth Boyce said they had questions before making a decision on where they stand.

"It's a little premature to say we oppose it. Right now, there's nothing to oppose. Half of the things people are asking, there's no way to know," Boyce said.

Each council member will send an opinion on the toll road, along with any questions or concerns, to Price this week.

He will draft a letter and council members will review it before it is sent to state officials and lawmakers.

Board

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

that needs to be defined. How do we move forward? How do we deliver educational curriculum is the first part of their process, and we need to define that and follow with the building in that light," board member James Copp said.

Board members are not ready to demolish old buildings, expand roads or start renovating the hallways, cafeteria and office at the high school, they said at a meeting Monday.

Instead, they asked architects to work on creating a master plan for the high school campus.

They also asked the architect, along with the district's financial adviser, to create two new timelines for the projects.

The schedules would explain

"This is an important process that needs to be defined. How do we move forward? How do we deliver educational curriculum is the first part of their process, and we need to define that and follow with the building in that light."

James Copp

Center Grove school board member on how focus needs to be put on education planning before design work, financing and site preparation are done

how the physical expansion and the educational changes could work together as long as designs for the school are not made until the new educational program is ready.

Board members were not interested in architects creating flexible space that could be used for any new model of teaching, or starting preliminary work to the school to improve the layout of parking lots, or the movement of students inside the building.

Every aspect of the layout of the newly designed school needs

to be based on what the faculty decides is the best new model for teaching students, board members said.

The administration believes the new teaching model will have something to do with a format called small learning communities but needs about 10 more months to do more exploring and visit schools that use the plans and programs.

Until then, board member Jackie Ponder said, she wondered if any work on the campus should wait until the academic

Comments

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of attracting development and saying that businesses cite Indiana's highway system as a reason for relocating.

State government is looking 20 years ahead in anticipating transportation needs, said Gary Abell, a spokesman with the department.

Franklin city attorney Robert Schafstall, who said he was speaking only for himself, said he has attended several public meetings on the beltway and the presentation always seems to shift.

"The rationale seems to evolve as people ask the hard questions," he said. "But I suppose that's why you hired a (public relations) firm to promote this."

The state looks past the interest of its residents, said Tracy Mabry, president of the Johnson County Farm Bureau.

He accused the governor of not listening to the people and threatened to leave Johnson County if a toll road is built.

"We want farmland to be recognized as developed land, not the first choice for paving roads," he said.

"This isn't a city like Indianapolis, and we are fed up with so-called progress. This is going backwards."

Others echoed his sentiment, including Trafalgar resident

Donna Badger, who said that as a Johnson County resident she never voted for Sen. Tom Wyss, R-Fort Wayne, who introduced the beltway bill.

No one in Johnson County voted for a toll road, Badger said.

She said she wouldn't have voted for Daniels if he had brought up the toll road while running for office. She asked that a beltway be brought to a public vote and suggested the governor be recalled from office.

Opponents of his plan face condemnation, she said.

"We may not have book learning down here," she said.

"But we're smart enough to recognize when politicians are riding roughshod over constituents."

A spokeswoman for the governor's office ended the meeting by saying Daniels would scrap the beltway plan if the public is dead-set against it.

Smaller groups that state officials met with tend to be supportive, Abell said.

Franklin resident Vicki Young has been going door to door, collecting signatures opposing the toll road.

She owns property that falls in the potential toll-road route. She said her family hopes to build a home on the land and retire there.

"Hopefully, the outcome of this hasn't already been decided," she said. "We ask you: Don't lease out Johnson County."

STATEHOUSE BRIEFS

INDIANAPOLIS

Democrats fail to pass own property tax plan

Democrats who narrowly control the House failed to pass their own property tax plan Tuesday when legislators voted 49-48 on the bill.

It takes 51 votes to pass or defeat a bill outright, meaning the legislation could still come up for another vote.

Two Democrats joined Republicans who voted against the bill, and three Republicans were not present and were excused from voting.

House Democratic leaders had said their plan would result in significant property tax relief to homeowners and give local governments more flexibility in raising revenue. They are goals shared by leaders in the Republican-controlled Senate and Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels.

Daniels, who has not had warm relations with House Democrats, even sent House Speaker Patrick Bauer, D-South Bend, a handwritten memo thanking his caucus for putting a plan on the table and getting it through committee to the full floor last week. He said the plan was very constructive at first glance and had several features that made good sense.

But House Republicans, outnumbered 51-49, criticized it on several

fronts and offered numerous amendments to change it only to see all of them rejected by Democrats.

INDIANAPOLIS

Proposal would add more limits to teen drivers

Teenage drivers would be required to get a lot more practice behind the wheel, and would be banned from using cell phones while driving until age 18, under a bill that cleared a Senate committee Tuesday.

The legislation would also eventually move the age requirement for a driver's license to 16½.

Supporters say such restrictions will improve safety by giving beginning drivers more practice. But some lawmakers questioned whether the bill, which passed the Senate Transportation Committee on a 5-4 vote, would work.

"This is another example of government trying to overstep its boundaries," said Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel.

The bill would require teens applying for a license to have at least 50 hours of supervised driving practice, with 10 of those hours at night.

Bill sponsor and committee chairman Sen. Tom Wyss, R-Fort Wayne, said most teenagers have someone they can turn to for driving practice.

Advocates said traffic accidents

INDIANAPOLIS

Bill would stop smoking in cars with children

Indiana smokers would have to kick the habit, at least while driving with young passengers, if state Rep. Charlie Brown has his way.

A bill by the Gary Democrat would ban smoking in passenger vehicles in which children under age 13 are present.

The House Judiciary Committee endorsed the bill 8-1 on Tuesday and sent it to the full, Democrat-controlled House, where Brown predicted it would pass. Its chances in the Republican-ruled Senate were unclear.

Under Brown's bill, police could not stop a motorist solely because someone was smoking with children in the car. The initial stop would have to be based on a primary offense, such as speeding.

A smoking violation would carry a \$25 fine the first time and \$100 for any subsequent offense.

The bill also would make it illegal to smoke in mass transportation terminals such as airports or bus stations, or within 100 feet of their entrances.

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