



Officials applaud progress on transportation bill

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Oklahoma Department of Transportation officials on Wednesday praised U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe, ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, in gaining approval of bipartisan legislation to fund and streamline transportation programs over the next two years.

The committee on Wednesday sent proposed legislation to the full Senate, which would authorize the expenditure of funds for the nation's transportation program for the next two years. Since 2009, the nation's transportation system has been funded with a series of short-term measures. This is the first step in the process of putting in place long-term funding and much-needed reforms.

Oklahoma Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley noted the bill includes several key reforms that Senator Inhofe has advocated for years that will increase efficiency. Ridley also noted long-term funding is necessary to keep ODOT's construction program on schedule.

"Putting this legislation together is difficult at best during these times and we very much appreciate Sen. Inhofe's leading role in this significant accomplishment," Ridley said. "Not only does this bill provide the necessary funding for transportation it also makes better use of resources by allowing flexibility in where funds are spent."

The proposed legislation:

- Maintains transportation's historic funding levels
- Consolidates numerous programs to focus on core transportation needs
- Reduces regulations to expedite projects

By consolidating programs and reducing regulation, transportation funds can be spent more wisely and targeted to Oklahoma's most pressing needs. Providing funding over multiple years provides the certainty necessary for efficient planning.

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(Editors and News Directors: For more information call the ODOT Media & Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

INFORMATION RELEASE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION
200 N.E. 21st St. OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-3204 PHONE 405-521-6000

