

Pursell Confident On Transit Bill; Faust Says Out-State Area Benefits

An Observer
Roundup

LANSING

Although the mass transit provision of Gov. Milliken's transportation package failed in a Senate vote last week, State Sen. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) is confident it will pass on a second vote scheduled for Dec. 11.

Pursell, who has been a prime proponent of mass transit, voted for the bill along with Sens. Daniel Cooper (D-Oak Park) and David Plawecki (D-Deerborn Heights).

Sen. William Faust (D-Westland) voted against the

transit bill, saying that the residents of his 13th district would lose more money than they would receive under the bill.

"I WOULD BE optimistic that it will pass," Pursell said, surveying a list of senators who voted against it. He said the prime opposition came from out-state representatives who don't want money diverted from the highway fund for mass transit.

"They want all of it," Pursell said of the tax revenue. The \$83 million package would be financed with a two-cent increase in the gasoline tax. Under the

proposal, one-half cent of the increase would be allocated to mass transit purposes.

Pursell said the 17-17 split, three votes short of passing it, was primarily a urban and out-state split. The formula for diversion of highway funds generally favors the out-state areas with urban areas putting in more than they get out, he said.

From a conservative view, Pursell said that mass transit will move more people than expressways. He was critical of expressways such as I-496 which splits Farmington and the proposed I-275 which splits Livonia.

If the bill is finally passed, some mass transit funds will

be used to subsidize the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority along with matching federal funds. The authority will then coordinate bus systems which can act as a feeder into the mass transit system.

FAUST SAID he voted against the provision because "it was in the best economic interest to the district I represent."

"In general, for every dollar we sent to Lansing, the people in my district tend to get 25 cents back," he said.

He said he can't support an increase in the gas tax until inequities in state financing are resolved. By comparison,

Faust pointed out that many out-state areas which benefit most from highway construction pay a smaller portion in both school millages and gasoline taxes.

If the mass transit provision weren't tied to the rest of the transportation package, he would have supported it, Faust said.

"My sympathies are generally in this area," he said, adding that he would support funding for exploration of new means of mass transit.

A subway system would be prohibitive because of the cost, an estimated \$10 million per mile, Faust said.

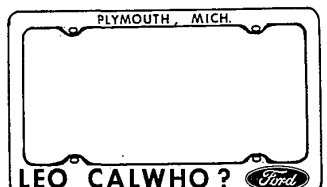
FAUST WAS also critical

for the provision which would "keep in operation a bus system that, by all expert advice, is broke."

When residents of his district were surveyed last spring on an increase in the

gas tax, Faust said that 84 per cent opposed the increase with 91 per cent of Westland's residents opposed.

"The handwriting was on the wall about what they think," he added.



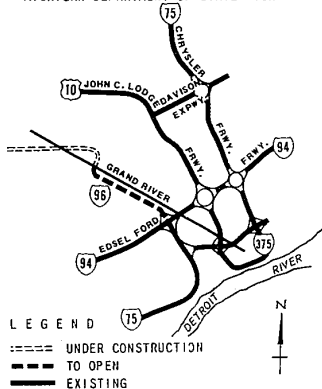
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FIRST SECTION OF THE Jeffries Freeway will be open Dec. 7. Eventually, it will be extended out Schoolcraft and Haggerty roads.

City I-96 Leg Opens Dec. 7

A three mile section of Interstate 96 (Jeffries) Freeway in Detroit will be opened to traffic Thursday, Dec. 7, at 9:30 a.m. the State Highway Commission announced.

The new section of eight-lane divided freeway will extend I-96 northwest from I-94 (Ford) Freeway to a temporary connection with Grand River Avenue.

Public dedication and ribbon cutting ceremonies, in cooperation with the City of Detroit, the Department of State Highways and the Wayne County Road Commission, will be held on the new freeway at the I-94 interchange.

COST OF THE 3.3 mile section, extending from I-94 northwest to Grand River Avenue, totaled \$35.8 million, excluding right-of-way and engineering costs.

Contractors on the project were C. J. Rogers and Juiton-Kelly of Detroit; Greenfield Construction Co. of Livonia; Kensington Corp. of Novi; and K. G. Marks Inc., of Port Huron. Construction has been under way for three years.

I-96 is now open between Muskegon and a point north of Livonia near Novi.

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