

# Road bills given Legislative slow down

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

State Sen. Richard Fessler's bills to raise the fuel tax 2 cents and float a \$900 million bond issue for road construction have hit two snags.

"My bills were referred to the Senate Finance Committee," said Fessler, R-Commerce. He had hoped they would be referred to his own State Affairs, Tourism and Transportation Committee.

The Finance Committee is headed by Sen. Norm Shinkle, R-Monroe County. The referral was made by

Senate Majority Leader John Engler, R-Mount Pleasant, the probable GOP 1990 candidate for governor.

Fessler guessed that Engler might be concerned about looking like a tax-raising candidate.

SO FAR, no public hearings have been scheduled by the Finance Committee. Fessler had hoped for public hearings this summer.

A Fessler aide said the prolonged legislative battle with Gov. James Blanchard over the budget and "supplemental" spending might make it difficult to schedule summer hearings.

**Fessler's Senate Bills 488 and 489 would lift the fuel tax to 17 cents from the current 15 cents a gallon effective in 1991 and use the increase to pay off a \$900 million state bond issue.**

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The Senate is scheduled to meet July 12 and only every two weeks throughout the summer.

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THE MICHIGAN Municipal League, an organization of cities and villages, is opposing one major feature.

"The League is strongly opposed to earmarking the municipal share of a state-issued bond," it said in a legislative report. "Cities and villages should continue to decide locally how much of their street money to allocate for maintenance and how much, if any, for bond issues for construction."

"If municipal governments need to bond for street projects, they have the authority to do so. The Legisla-

ture should not mandate it."

"Under the bill, the state's share of the increase is earmarked for a bond issue to construct seven specific state highway projects."

THE STATE Department of Transportation also opposes legislative earmarking of specific projects, although it agrees with Fessler's choices.

Among them are M-9 (Haggerty corridor), widening of M-59 in western Oakland and Livingston counties, and reconstruction of the Davison freeway in Detroit.

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