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Sent: Friday, April 22, 2016 12:11 PM

To: Announcements From Representative Joyce Peppin

Subject: Roads, Bridges and Buffers

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Rep. Joyce Peppin 34A - Legislative Update

News Items



Dear Neighbors,

Here is an update from St. Paul.

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[Senate DFL Budget, Broadband and Trivia](#) -
(Posted: 2016-04-15)

[Budget Targets, Standing Up for Minnesota Teachers and Holding MNsure Accountable](#) -
(Posted: 2016-04-08)

[What do blaze pink, MNsure reform and bargain shopping have in common?](#) - (Posted: 2016-04-01)

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Passing a Transportation Bill this Session

As I discussed briefly in last week's legislative update, the Senate DFL majority unveiled their proposed budget targets and their proposal devotes less than four percent of the state's \$900 million surplus to transportation. Instead of using these one-time surplus dollars for roads and bridges, a priority that we all have agreed is important, Democrats are continuing to push for a regressive gas tax increase. I have heard overwhelmingly from people in my district that they oppose Governor Dayton's gas tax hike proposal which would skyrocket our gas tax to the second highest in the nation.

This week, U.S. Senator Al Franken and the Chair of the Metropolitan Council came out urging legislators to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer money on the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) this session, a project that has seen a nearly 50 percent increase in cost estimates from \$1.2 billion to \$1.77 billion. Both federal and local tax dollars would go toward SWLRT.

The growing price tag of this expensive train in Minneapolis should give taxpayers pause and make state leaders think long and hard about the best way to utilize state monies. Ninety-eight percent of Minnesotans rely on our state's roads and bridges to get to work and drive their kids to school, and I would argue investing in road and bridge improvements is a

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much more cost-effective option that positively impacts more Minnesotans.

What's more, for the amount of money requested for SWLRT, we could repave six lanes on every interstate in Minnesota, fund four years of Metro Transit bus operations, make a historic investment in the new small cities road and bridge funding program and fund local projects across the state like the County Highway 81 bridge over Interstate 94 in the northwest suburbs.

House Republicans are proposing a plan that responsibly uses taxes Minnesotans are already paying on car parts, auto repairs, vehicle leases and rental cards, and dedicating that revenue to a special Transportation Stability Fund. Coupled with a portion of the \$900 million surplus and bonding, we can fix 15,500 lane miles of roads and 330 bridges statewide—investing in our shared priorities without taking more of your hard earned money.

I think it's time to get serious about transportation at the legislature. The governor, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle should support a transportation plan that works for all Minnesotans. One that doesn't spend more money on light rail and take more from family budgets.

Buffers

Over the last several years, there has been increasing talk about “buffers” at the Capitol. Buffers, or buffer strips are the undeveloped, un-farmed sections of land that lie between a lake, river, wetland or waterway and an actively farmed field. The purpose of buffer strips is to help protect wetlands and waterways by filtering sediments, fertilizers and toxins out of the water running toward them, promoting the retention of nutrients in the soil, and sheltering plants and animals from direct contact with adjacent human activities.

In order to keep our lakes, rivers and waterways clean, buffers make sense. However, just how large should these buffer strips be, and are all sources of water equally deserving of protection from buffer strips? That’s where the debate begins. For instance, a 50 foot buffer on either side of a stream running through a farmer’s field could take several acres (or more) out of production.

Last year, the legislature passed changes to buffer laws to address what many thought was a burdensome one-size-fits-all proposal that would have put 50-foot buffer zones around all state waterways. To modify that proposal, House Republicans helped craft compromise legislation that protected farmers and landowners, created additional flexibility on public water requirements and ensured local control of buffer enforcement and implementation.

After the law was passed, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Governor Dayton tried to include

private ditches in the buffer requirements, something that went against bipartisan legislative intent and the agreement struck between all affected parties. To clarify the law and give additional control to local governments, some changes were passed by the House on Thursday.

The legislation clarifies that public waters are only those on the public waters inventory and that private ditches will not be subjected to the new law. It also reinforces that the DNR's only role will be to conduct mapping, as well as shifts buffer jurisdiction and enforcement from state to local agencies. Finally, the bill also ensures farmers are fairly compensated based on property values prior to the installation of buffers.

These small changes will offer additional protections to Minnesotans subjected to buffer laws, give more authority to local county governments and watershed districts instead of the state, and help keep our lakes, rivers, wetlands, streams and waterways clean.

Peppin's MinnTriv

Thank you to everyone who participated in our first Peppin's MinnTriv quiz!

"Holy Cow" was the answer to our first MinnTriv question: *Minnesota baseball commentator Halsey Hall was famous for saying what phrase during a baseball broadcast?*

Congratulations to C.J. Lyngen of Rogers who had the first correct response!

Our question this week has three parts: ***What common medical device was invented in Minnesota in 1957? Who was the inventor? Where specifically was it invented?***

Reply to this email with your answer, and I'll share the winner of the Peppin MinnTriv question in my legislative update next week.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns on an issue relating to state government, my office is available to help. My direct line is 651-296-7806. My email address is rep.joyce.peppin@house.mn and my mailing address is Room 459 State Office Building, 100 Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55155.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Joyce

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