

## NEVADA HIGHWAY USERS COALITION

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### **Lack of Highway Funding Pinches Everyone's Pocketbook Economic Study Shows Negative Impact of Lost Time; Highway Projects Stimulate Local Economies**

Testimony on SB 324 – Nevada's Highway Funding Bill

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**(Carson City, NV – April 11, 2007)** -- The Nevada Highway Users Coalition Tuesday presented to the Senate Taxation Committee findings from "Nevada Transportation Issues: An Economic and Fiscal Overview." Highlights from the study were presented to the Committee by Jeremy Aguero, Principle of Applied Analysis. Highlights include:

- Congestion is perhaps the most cited concern among citizens
  - Southern Nevada's Travel Time Index is the 10<sup>th</sup> worst in the nation and is roughly equivalent to that in New York City.
  - Southern Nevada reports an average of 7.6 "rush hours" each day.
- Congestion costs Southern Nevadans an estimated \$380 million annually, roughly \$279 per capita. (Texas Transportation Institute)
- For every \$1 that is spent on highway construction, a total of \$1.52 is spent throughout the economy; generating more jobs and a greater tax base.
- If \$3.8 billion was spent on highway construction, it would result in an estimated total economic output of \$5,765,458,800.
- 1/2 of 1% of visitors generate spending in the local Nevada economy that is greater than the highway funding shortfall.
- Delaying construction of projects for 5 years will cause a 26.4% increase in the cost of the project. **This means that the I-15 project will cost Nevada taxpayers an additional \$611 million and I-80 will cost an additional \$229 million.**

Tuesday's hearing was the first review of SB 324, the Highway Funding and Accountability Act of 2007. This bill addresses the Nevada Department of Transportation's Blue Ribbon Task Force recommendations and analysis that the state is \$3.8 billion behind in necessary highway funding over the next eight years.

Bill sponsor, Senator Mark Amodei, said that while he does not support all of the financial elements of the bill, the highway funding program is crucial.

"The issue is acute," said Senator Amodei. "We need to start the discussion of funding this need."

(more)

Supporters of the bill who testified included members of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, the Henderson Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Transportation Commission of Clark County and the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County. Several individuals from the Blue Ribbon Task Force also spoke in favor of the bill.

“This issue is not just an urban county problem or a rural county problem,” said Jeff Fontaine, former Director of the Nevada Department of Transportation and current Executive Director of the Nevada Association of Counties. “It (highway funding) affects our entire state. It affects our economy and our quality of life.”

After Tuesday’s hearing, the Senate Taxation Committee wants to keep the bill alive despite an April 13 passage deadline and will seek exemption from the rule.

**About the NHUC:** The Nevada Highway Users Coalition (NHUC) was formed to advance the rights of Nevada’s residents and visitors to travel on safe, reliable public roads; for the efficient transport of goods and effective public safety; and to hold government accountable for ensuring financing is transparent, motivated by public good and dedicated to transportation purposes. NHUC’s Chairman is Stan Goodin.

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