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★ DISTRICT 2 ★

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## **Texas House Passes Transportation Legislation**

AUSTIN - This evening, the Texas House of Representatives passed two pivotal pieces of transportation legislation, HB1 and SJR1. The failure of this legislation to pass in the two previous special sessions forced Governor Perry to call the body back immediately upon adjournment from the second session on July 30. The passage of both bills would begin to address a long-term funding plan for transportation projects across the state.

Representative Dan Flynn (R-Van) voted for both measures although maintained reservations over the failure to establish a concrete Emergency Stabilization Fund (ESF) spending floor and end diversions. "I do appreciate the oversight granted to members of both the House and the Senate through the creation of a select committee to determine an appropriate ESF floor," stated Representative Flynn Monday night. "While this legislation does not necessarily address every concern I have, the bills reflect the work that must be done in order to garner the votes necessary to continue funding of needed transportation projects. Above all things, there is unanimous consensus that we must adequately fund current and future transportation projects in Texas with an even distribution of funds."

SJR 1, the funding mechanism for the transportation bills, would send half of the revenue from oil and gas production to the State Highway Fund. Current projections indicate the first transfer would mean at least an additional \$878 million available for transportation in FY 2015. The funds allocated from this appropriation would only be allowed to address construction, maintenance, and acquisition of right-of-ways for non-toll public roadways. SJR1 will be placed on the November 2014 ballot, and if passed, would go into effect immediately.

"The passage of these bills will now give us the opportunity to address rural transportation projects important to East Texas," said Flynn. "Attention must be paid to the vital needs of the Interstate 30 corridor expansion and Interstate 20 enhancements which are essential to the health of East Texas jobs and preservation of our communities and families."

Upon final passage of HB1, 124-2, the Texas House adjourned Sine Die pending administrative duties.

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