

Part of the governor's highway plan needs one final vote to fully pass in the legislature. The House Committee on Revenue and Taxation approved the bill on Tuesday.

Rep. Mike Holcomb, R-Pine Bluff who brought the bill to the committee, said never before has he seen such cooperation on coming up with a highway plan. While he acknowledged that the bill is "not perfect," he also said Arkansas cannot wait any longer to work on its roads.

NEWS02 :19 "...to recover"
"If we continue to delay the necessary repairs that we need on our state highways, our bridges, our streets...If we don't do that right away, rather than spending hundreds of thousands, we're going to be spending millions to recover."

One part of the bill mandates \$35 million dollars be collected annually from the state. The state expects casinos to provide this revenue through to the expansion that voters approved in November. However, if revenue from gaming falls short of the required \$35 million, which is predicted for the next few years, the remaining funds must come from other areas of the state budget.

Paul Gehring with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration, said the \$35 million minimum was required each year as a part of this bill, and the governor and the legislature would have to work on the budget to allocate the required funding for the plan.

The bill now heads to the House for a full vote. If passed, it then goes to the governor.