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LB 722

that I think should be a low priority. As a member of the Appropriations Committee I might wish to move those individual projects down, and there are some projects or efforts that I think should be a high priority, and we could do that as nine individuals on the committee, as forty-nine individuals on the legislative floor, shifting and maneuvering, eliminating a north expressway here, promoting or stopping a west bypass there, calling for the paving of a certain road in a certain community or whatever, and maybe that is the way it should be done and I think someone this morning indicated that we will probably start approaching roads just like capital construction. Now if that is the type of way we want to do it in kind of a porkbarrel logrolling vote-trading approach, then maybe, indeed, that is the way it should be done. But what I am offering here is a statutory guideline as far as priority that the Department of Roads should use in developing their list to submit to us, that then we in turn should use as a guideline in approving and dealing with that list, and that perhaps rather than look at things in terms of this individual project or that individual project, we would have some sort of criteria to review it. Now the list that I provide puts new construction as the lowest priority. I do this for a very very specific reason. We have been told that we cannot maintain the roads that we have. We have been told that we have numerous needs in terms of bridge replacement. We have been told that we are falling behind already on upkeep of the interstate system, and indeed if that is true, then those things should be the first priority. If we are passing 722 to provide that sort of money for reconstruction and maintenance, then that should be the first priority and these dollars should not be used for new construction. I feel though sometimes that, in fact, those interested in road construction want it both ways. They come to us and they say, we need this money for maintenance because they know that is the most politically sellable thing, but when they develop their five-year road plans they still include in their new construction that it can cost in their urban area as much as ten million dollars a mile or more, and use up large amounts of this gas tax increase for new construction, turn around and come back the next year and say, gosh, we have got a problem with maintenance, we can't keep up with county roads or bridges, we can't keep up with the interstate system and so on. So this is the system of priorities. It is, if you will, an effort to try and make the people that are promoting this bill stick to what they claim is the need for that bill. Broader than that, it is an effort to create within this Legislature now a system of judgment for the