

when? This year, last year, next year, forever? See what I'm saying? It doesn't deal with the fundamental issue of how much you're spending. So if you're going to attempt this so that you're not actually, simply shifting to the gas tax, then do it at least the right way and for that reason I'm voting against this. As to whether you should be cutting the Roads Department budget overall, that's a separate issue, a legitimate issue, but at least, if you're going to do it, do it kind of halfway right. All you are generating here is absolute confusion.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Warner.

SENATOR WARNER: Again, I want to emphasize the one point that I think is important and that is the public's right to know. And that is, if you want to reduce the Highway Department's budget, then as has been repeatedly said, you reduce the appropriation and they will reduce the one-year road program. Now, why is it important? What I want to see avoided, '79, when we went into the variable tax, there was, if I remember correctly, 42 projects on the one-year program that were never completed at that time during that year because of revenue shortfall. And that was because consumption of gasoline was going down and the tax collections were going down. The only savable thing all through the '70s, as a matter of fact, was the sales tax on motor vehicles or we would have had a much higher gas tax long time ago or much poorer roads. But it is so important that the public has faith in that one-year program and, if we want to reduce roads, reduce it. Don't put the public in the position of thinking the road that is of concern to them is going to be done this year when you know it isn't because the revenue isn't there. You have to understand the way the revenue, or the variable works, if it collects more than we appropriate, which was true in '84, if I remember correctly, we...they didn't spend that money that was collected. They couldn't. It exceeded their appropriation and we reduced the variable by a half of a cent for the following year. By virtue, we had a beginning balance. Now if you come up short this year by reducing the available revenue, the option of the increased gas tax, assuming you want the one-year program funded, is to increase the gas tax next year. They will be billed a year later, but at least they will be billed. In the '70s we had a one-year program that had been on for 14 years as a one-year program. Now you do not build confidence in public in their government when you