



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

El Paso Press Release

**Contact:**

Daniel Collins

(915) 544-1990

[daniel.collins@senate.state.tx.us](mailto:daniel.collins@senate.state.tx.us)



---

## For Immediate Release

April 16, 2009

### **EL PASO INCLUDED ON LOCAL FUNDING OPTION BILL PASSED BY TEXAS SENATE TWO POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES STILL NEED OK FROM TEXAS SENATE, VOTERS**

*"With SB 855, El Paso now has the tools to build highways, fund transit and keep El Paso moving. Having voters approve the projects and funding options guarantees broad support in our community. Without this funding, the highway fund will have no money to build new projects. In our view, not moving forward is not an option."*

\*\*\*\*\*

**AUSTIN** - This month, the Texas Senate passed a bill that would allow local governments to raise funding for new road and rail projects. An amendment by Senator Shapleigh would ensure El Paso County would be eligible for that money.

SB 855, passed by the Texas Senate on April 14, 2009, would give certain urban areas the option to call an election for voters to decide whether or not to approve new funding streams to build roads and railways. These funding streams could include any of the following:

- a new resident impact fee on vehicles previously registered out of state;
- a mobility improvement fee to be imposed at time of vehicle registration;
- a driver fee imposed upon renewal of driver's licenses;
- a local option gas tax;
- an emissions fee imposed at time of vehicle inspection; or
- a parking fee imposed on publically-owned parking lots

Two of those funding items— gas taxes and auto registrations— would require a change in the Texas Constitution before revenue from either could be used to fund transportation projects. These proposed amendments must first be approved by the Texas Legislature before being offered to Texas voters November 3.

- More -

800 WYOMING AVE., SUITE A • EL PASO, TEXAS 79902

---

(800) 544-1990 • (915) 544-1990

As introduced, the bill would have only allowed areas in North Texas, Bexar County and Travis County to opt-in to the program. Senator Shapleigh filed an amendment to the bill that would include El Paso as an eligible county.

Participating counties who decide to opt-in to the program would have to first establish a "Project and Fee Selection Committee" to determine transportation projects and related cost to be considered on a ballot. The committee must present their recommendations to the local governing body, who then decides whether or not an election should be held.

The ballot items, if accepted, would be held in a November election.

This bill was created in reaction to woefully inadequate funding to meet Texas' mobility needs. With Texas set to grow up to 49 million inhabitants by 2050, we are \$256 billion short of meeting mobility needs, or \$8 billion each year. Over 10 years, more than \$11.2 billion that is supposed to be dedicated to roads has been diverted from the highway fund to pay for other underfunded programs like the Department of Public Safety and public schools.

"With SB 855, El Paso now has the tools to build highways, fund transit and keep El Paso moving. Having voters approve the projects and funding options guarantees broad support in our community. Without this funding, the highway fund will have no money to build new projects. In our view, not moving forward is not an option." Senator Shapleigh said.

Basic infrastructure is the key to a competitive economy—without the ability to move people and products, manufacturers and others will go to states and countries that can.

- End -

800 WYOMING AVE., SUITE A • EL PASO, TEXAS 79902

---

(800) 544-1990 • (915) 544-1990