

Transportation spending gets new look

by UPI

MINNEAPOLIS -- In the wake of the collapse of a highway bridge in Minneapolis, politicians across the country are rethinking transportation spending. In Minnesota, Gov. Tim Pawlenty may have changed his mind about an increase in the state gas tax, The New York Times reported. The Republican governor has vetoed two proposed hikes. A spokesman, Brian McClung, said that Pawlenty is now "open" to a tax increase. "He believes we need to do everything we can to address this situation and the extraordinary costs," McClung said. At issue is not just the amount of money spent on roads and public transit but how much is spent on repairs, instead of new construction. Much of the nation's interstate highway system dates from the 1950s and 1960s when far fewer vehicles were on the roads. Congressional representatives tend to push for federal money for new construction in their districts. "The bottom line is that routine but important things like maintenance always get shortchanged because it's nice for somebody to cut a ribbon for a new structure," Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., told the Times.

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