

House Republican Press Release

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Reps Burns, Hamzy: Fiscally Responsible Bond Package Passes CT General Assembly Measure to Help Fund School Construction, Transportation Infrastructure, Bristol Projects



A fiscally responsible bond package approved by the Connecticut General Assembly Tuesday will help pay for important Bristol projects and provide funding for school construction and transportation infrastructure projects statewide without increasing the burden on taxpayers or threatening the state's bond rating, state Representatives William A. Hamzy and Ron Burns said today.

The \$2.82 billion package approved Tuesday was significantly less expensive than the \$3.2 billion measure that passed on party line votes in September, with the majority Democrats voting to approve the bill. House Republicans opposed that Democrat measure but voted for a leaner alternative Republican bond package, which failed on another party-line vote.

Governor Rell vetoed the earlier Democrat bonding bill, citing excessive spending on pork barrel projects that could have jeopardized the state's bond rating and unduly burdened taxpayers. She has indicated she will sign the measure that passed Tuesday.

"The bonding package approved by the majority Democrats a few weeks ago called for excessive spending on pork barrel projects that did not serve the overall interests of the people of Connecticut, would have increased the burden on taxpayers who already bear the nation's third-highest per capita state debt, and threatened our currently favorable bond rating," said Representative Burns, R-77th District, who serves on the General Assembly's Appropriations Committee.

"Interestingly enough, the measure we approved today is almost a mirror image of the alternative bond package we offered in September. Weeks of uncertainty over the future of school building projects around the state could have been avoided if Democrat legislators had crossed party lines and voted to approve our proposal," Representative Burns said.

"Governor Rell did the right thing by vetoing the majority Democrats' original bonding proposal while Republican legislators showed it was possible to put together a responsible measure that provided funding for repairs and improvements to our highways and bridges and for school construction projects throughout the state without increasing the tax burden on working families," said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District, who had a prior commitment in Washington, D.C., and was unable to be in Hartford for Tuesday's vote. "I'm proud of the work I did to help draft our alternative bond package, which in many ways was the model for the measure that passed today. Unfortunately, I had to be in our nation's capitol for an engagement that could not be postponed or I would have been on the state House floor and would have voted for the bond package that passed today."

Grants authorized for Bristol projects in the bill that passed Tuesday include:

- \$3,500,000 for road relocation, utility upgrades, new service facilities and other improvements related to the expansion of Lake Compounce Water Park.
- \$373,170 for the Bristol Community Organization, Inc., to purchase a building for the expansion of the Head Start program.
- \$200,000 for the Environmental Learning Center to be used for infrastructure improvements at Indian Rock Nature Preserve in Bristol.

The bond package also authorized \$15,118,861 for alterations and improvements to buildings and grounds at Tunxis Community College, which draws many of its students from the Greater Bristol area. Funding for those projects also had been included in the earlier Democrat bonding bill and the Republican alternative package.