



Florida House of Representatives

Kevin C. Ambler

Representative, District 47

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Rep. Ambler Gets Funding Approved for Lutz Lake Fern Road Interchange

Tallahassee, FL – On Thursday, when Governor Crist signed the new state budget into law it included a seemingly small item compared to the nearly \$72 billion in total expenditures that likely would have been overlooked by the average Floridian; but, its importance will certainly be noticed by the thousands of families living, working and commuting in Northwest Hillsborough County who have been anxiously awaiting for this day to arrive.

This budget item, which has such great local interest, is contained in just one short sentence inserted by State Representative Kevin Ambler (R-Tampa) within the transportation appropriations—that sentence earmarks \$975,000 to complete the planning, engineering, and design for a new interchange at Lutz Lake Fern Road and the Veteran’s Expressway. The project, which was not initially scheduled to be built until 2015, was moved up to the 2005 list at the request of Rep. Ambler three years ago, however, the project was still kept on hold pending state funding.

Rep. Ambler, who serves on the House Policy and Budget Council, worked closely with Governor Crist throughout the budget process to finally make this community project a reality.

Rep. Ambler sponsored the budget request to help alleviate the traffic congestion in the areas of Lutz, Keystone, Cheval, Villa Rosa, Heritage Harbour, Montreaux, and Stillwater, and the surrounding communities as well as for those attending McKittrick Elementary and Martinez Middle Schools. Lutz Lake Fern Road is also the only access road for a critically needed proposed high school anticipated to open in the 2009 school year which will benefit greatly from this project. The construction of the new high school has been determined to be absolutely necessary in order to avoid having to go to double sessions at nearby Gaither and Sickles High Schools in order to comply with constitutional mandates of the Class Size Amendment which begins full implementation in 2008.

“Legislative budget items often take years to come to fruition and require a lot of persistence,” said Rep. Ambler. “This interchange has been a top priority of mine since I was first elected in 2002.” This road project also has been a major transportation priority for the community for some time, and it has tremendous support of Mary Ellen Elia, Superintendent of Hillsborough County Schools and Hillsborough County Commission Chairman, Jim Norman. “We all agree completing this road project is a crucial part of a master plan to upgrade the quality of life in the area by unclogging the roads traveled by parents, students, teachers, and other residents every day,” Rep. Ambler said.

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Committees: Chair, Joint Legislative Sunset Committee * Policy and Budget Council * Education Innovation and Career Preparation Committee * Utilities and Telecommunications Committee * Courts Committee

After attending the budget signing with Gov. Crist in Tampa, Rep. Ambler said he looks forward to working closely with the Florida Turnpike Authority over the next couple of years to ensure that the project is completed in time for the opening of the long awaited new high school in the Lutz area. Rep. Ambler will also continue working closely with Hillsborough County Commissioners on their plan, which is already in the works, to widen Lutz Lake Fern Road from the Veterans Expressway to Dale Mabry Highway to ease the demand on the grid-locked artery through Lutz and around the three school sites. . For more information about the Lutz Lake Fern Interchange please contact Rep. Ambler's office at 813-558-1333.

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