

# Orlando Sentinel

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## Orlando Sentinel

**3/20: Letters to the Editor**

### **Don't raid trust fund to aid state budget**

The Florida Transportation Builders Association agrees with the Orlando Sentinel's March 12 editorial "A jobs roadblock." The Florida Legislature should not consider raiding \$428 million from the state's transportation trust fund. While lawmakers have the difficult task of balancing the state budget, there are numerous negative repercussions that will come with sweeping the fund.

In 1989, the Florida Department of Transportation faced similar hardships and fundamentally went bankrupt, unable to fulfill its obligations and essentially stopping all road-construction projects. If money from the trust fund is reverted to general revenue, we might very well be in the same predicament. This decision will not only freeze funding for any new road projects in Florida, but the cut essentially could eliminate between 80,000 and 100,000 road-building jobs.

As a small highway-construction business owner with 39 employees, I am aware of Florida's record-high unemployment rate, and I fear this sweep will not only catapult unemployment beyond 11.9 percent, but it will be my business and employees who will be the ultimate casualties. The impact on our state in terms of jobs lost will consequently further strain Florida's weakened economy, as displaced transportation-infrastructure workers seek unemployment compensation.

We urge our elected officials to base their decision on smart policy and look at alternatives to managing the state's budget deficit.

Bonnie Rimel Chairwoman, Florida Transportation Builders Association