Gov. Perry Calls for an End to Budget Diversions from Transportation Projects

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.
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We appreciate everyone here at UPS for assisting us with this press conference today.

It's truly an exciting time to be in Texas, where we have an economic climate that's significantly better than elsewhere in the country.

Employment in many key sectors continues to grow, including the high-tech sectors that will be the basis for the next generations of jobs.

In fact, just over in Irving, they've been ranked No. 3 in the country for tech start-ups.

That's no small accomplishment, and it proudly reflects our state's unique combination of technological savvy and pioneer spirit.

As our economy surges, sales tax collections have increased, as well.

Some see this as an opportunity to crack open the budget and start spending freely.

That's the wrong approach.

In Texas, we see this as an opportunity to make our budget stronger, more secure for future generations.

That's why, earlier this year, I proposed the Texas Budget Compact, five effective principles that will lead to an even stronger Texas in the years to come.

Here's the short version, practice truth-in-budgeting, support a stricter constitutional limit on spending, oppose any new taxes or tax increases, preserve a strong Rainy Day Fund, and cut wasteful and redundant government programs and agencies.

A big part of practicing truth in budgeting is ensuring that the money the state collects is used for its intended purpose, and only that intended purpose.

And if not, we should stop collecting it.

Currently, in a tradition that's been around a long time, too long, really, the legislature has moved money from these dedicated accounts to shore up deficiencies elsewhere.

As Rep. [Linda] Harper Brown can tell you, nowhere has that happened more than in transportation funding.

All too often, Fund 6, used to fund road maintenance and construction and financed by a variety of taxes, including gas taxes, is tapped for entirely unrelated projects.

This has to stop. First, because it's not a transparent and honest accounting of

http://governor.state.tx.us/news/speech/17756/
our financial situation, and second, because we need to build roads.

Infrastructure is a major reason businesses make the decisions they make when it comes to expansion or relocation, and while Texas has been more than competitive in attracting employers, we have to keep up with demand.

Our friends here at UPS can tell you about the importance of transportation infrastructure.

But there's also a very basic quality of life consideration.

Because the more time you spend stuck in traffic commuting, the less quality time you have to spend with your loved ones at home.

And that's really the best use of anyone's time.

Texas is the best place to live, work and raise a family, but we can't take that for granted.

We must remain committed to the core conservative values that helped establish us as a national economic power, especially as states like Wisconsin and Florida have taken up our model and are all too eager to overtake us in terms of economic growth and job creation.

This Legislative Session offers a clear choice on the direction we'll go, and will play a big role in where we are, as a state, in the years to come.