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Va. legislators turn to computer for road priorities

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[Hank Silverberg](#), wtop.com

RICHMOND, Va. -- Supplied with very little money and significant demand, Virginia legislators are considering turning to a computer to choose which roads to fix or build.

The Virginia General Assembly, where spending money is always a political battle, may take some of the politics out of road improvements by using a computer model to prioritize the most-needed transportation projects.

Del. Jim LeMunyon, R-Fairfax/Loudoun, is proposing legislation that would require every road improvement in Northern Virginia be given an objective score by a computer model on how much congestion it would reduce before it is funded. It would consider factors such as the Dulles Rail extension and bus rapid transit.

"Make that result publicly known so that taxpayers and voters can hold us accountable for funding the projects that are really going to solve our congestion problem" says LeMunyon.

Gov. Bob McDonnell's Commission on Government Reform & Restructuring has already endorsed the proposal and LeMunyon says there's little opposition to the concept.

Humans would make the final decisions on which road to expand or repair, but the computer model would set the priorities.

"If we don't know what those priorities are, we can't fund them, and if we can't fund the things that are going to make the biggest difference you know this problem's just never going to go away," LeMunyon says.

The next assembly session begins Jan. 12.

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