



## **Carona told truth about state roads**

**Express-News Editorial Board -**

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The departure of Sen. John Carona as chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee is disappointing for Texans who want to see the state's infrastructure crisis addressed.

Carona pulled no punches in discussing the need for more funding and the foibles of the Texas Department of Transportation.

The Dallas Republican was so outspoken that Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst's announcement that Carona was being moved to lead the Business and Commerce Committee fueled a flurry of speculation.

Was his move retribution for his blunt talk about the need for new spending and poor leadership at the top? Apparently not.

Hearst Austin Bureau Chief Peggy Fikac talked to Carona after the announcement, and he told her that Dewhurst didn't initiate the change. Carona said he had told Dewhurst he was interested in the business committee.

Carona told Fikac, "As much as I will continue to advocate for funding, and as much as I would like to see and believe that funding is needed now rather than later, I do not envision the Legislature making the choice to take any bold steps regarding transportation funding in the next session, and candidly, that too is one of the reasons leading me to believe that I could better serve the body in the Business and Commerce Committee."

His analysis is distressing, but he is in a good position to know. And the state's expected \$18 billion shortfall certainly lends credibility to the low expectations for the 2011 session.

Sen. Tommy Williams, R-The Woodlands, will succeed Carona at the helm of the transportation panel, and the distress over losing Carona in the post is not a knock on Williams. It's an appreciation for Carona's good work.

As Carona moves to another role, he deserves gratitude from Texans for his honest and blunt handling of a huge crisis in the state.

Carona says he will remain vocal about the need for transportation funding. We hope he does.