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**Libous concerned about I-86 project**

**No money earmarked to complete Rte. 17 upgrade**

**BY YANCEY ROY**  
*Albany Bureau*

**ALBANY** -- The fact that the state doesn't have money earmarked to complete the upgrade Route 17 into an interstate doesn't necessarily mean the project will be delayed, officials sa Wednesday

Nor does it mean work could halt. Such projects don't have to have money set aside years in advance.

But the lack of specifics does have state Sen Thomas W. Libous concerned about the timetable. The road is supposed to be converted into Interstate 86 by 2009

"There never was a definite ending date," said Libous, R-Binghamton, new chairman of the Transportation Committee. "But my question now is: Will there be any interruptions?"

At issue is Gov George E Pataki's plan for roads, bridges and mass transit upgrades. Last week, the Republican outlined a five-year, \$36 billion proposal, but submitted only about three years' worth of funding, mostly through taxes and fees

At a legislative hearing this week, Pataki's transportation commissioner said the state could lease some bridges or highways and allow private operators to impose tolls.

No specific projects have been identified, said Ken Brown, a spokesman for Pataki's Budget Division



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"I-86 has always been a top priority of the governor's," Brown said. "The five-year capital plan will maintain that commitment "

**LIBOUS**

The administration also is seeking more federal transportation aid

The Interstate 86 project has never had a dedicated pool of state funds

Several legislators expressed skepticism about privatization. Assemblyman Richard Brodsky, D-Greenburgh, Westchester County, said the idea is not "good public policy."



**PATAKI**

Even if Pataki's plan is rejected, it does not mean transportation projects would be suspended

Libous said it's certain that the infrastructure-upgrade plan will require more money

"I would like to have funding for a five-year plan," the senator said.

Interstate 86 would run from Woodbury, Orange County, up through the Catskill Mountains Delaware, Broome and Tioga counties, then west through counties along the Pennsylvania border. Much of the upgrade is already completed. A key remaining stretch runs from Binghamton southeast through the Catskills, officials said

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