

# Senate approves transportation package

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The state Senate signed off on four transportation bills, including three that cleared the Assembly last week.

The package is part of a promise Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, made as the Joint Finance Committee worked on the budget to approve additional reforms to the Department of Transportation.

The three bills that have already cleared the Assembly include:

\*AB 273 would offer ways for the DOT to source materials at lower cost.

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\*AB 275 would require the DOT to up the number of design-build projects in its pipeline to ensure projects are ready to go once resources are available.

\*AB 284 would create a discretionary merit fund to incentivize employees to look for cost-saving methods.

All three cleared 19-14 along party lines.

A fourth bill, AB 285, was included on the calendar. It would require the DOT in some circumstances to reject a bid if it was the only one received on a project. But Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, said there was an issue with the bill and asked for it to be returned to Senate Org. He didn't specify the issue.

The fourth bill that was approved, SB 277, would require DOT to encourage the use of materials sourced from within the right-of-way of a proposed project.