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DON'T MESS WITH I-73

The S.C. Senate being the S.C. Senate, it's not surprising that the seemingly simple bill to allow tolls on Interstate 73 has gotten hung up indefinitely. Dashing hopes that the Senate would join the S.C. House in passing the bill quickly, two senators have entangled I-73 in a dispute over tolls for Interstate 95.

Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, blocked the I-73 bill because he wants to amend the bill to allow a toll booth on I-95. Sen. Larry Grooms, R-Bonneau, also blocked the bill because he objects to Hutto's amendment. Under Senate rules, it takes a two-thirds vote of the membership to remove member blocks.

The bill's passage - in pure form - is essential to show federal highway officials, as well as Congress, that South Carolina has a way to pay its share of the \$2 billion highway, which would stretch between the N.C.-S.C. state line in Marlboro County and Myrtle Beach. The hope must be that Hutto and Grooms quickly can work out their differences and let the I-73 bill go through.

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