Bowing to election-year politics, a Senate panel on Wednesday loaded up the state's capital construction program with more than $200 million in new projects, a majority of them for pet projects in senators' home districts.

The Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committee increased the state construction program from $1.16 billion to $1.39 billion as it added projects to be financed through state borrowing.

The Roemer administration was responsible for $93.7 million of the increase and senators added another $123 million.

Committee chairman Sen. Leonard Chabert, D-Chauvin, made it clear that all involved know the projects are subject to the governor's veto.

"There are a lot of amendments put on today that the governor reserves the right to consider for veto," Stine said. "We recognize the legislators' responsibility to put them on. It's our responsibility to review it (the program) to make sure it is fiscally responsible."

The Senate panel without objection approved the legislation, HB615 by Rep. Raymond Laborde, D-Marksville.

It now goes to the Senate Finance Committee, which will review the cash spending before the bill goes to the Senate floor for debate.

A key Roemer administration amendment added $25 million in borrowing to address state flooding problems. Stine said there would be a companion amendment taking $25 million in cash out of the state budget bill for that purpose.

The spending includes $10 million to match $10 million already in the bill for flood control projects and $15 million to match federal funds to fix problems occurring as a result of flooding that hit the state earlier this year.

Among the other items added by the administration were $17.8 million for asbestos abatement and renovation of various court buildings; $100,000 to match federal money for Baton Rouge riverfront levee improvements; $255,000 for LSU poultry farm relocation planning; $100,000 to construct Gateway Acadiana Visitor Center in Lafayette Parish; and several amounts for planning new charity hospitals.

Senators added projects ranging from tennis courts to bridges, athletic stadium improvements to road projects, Orleans housing project improvements to aquaculture equipment purchases.

Area senators joined the parade. Sen. Armand Brinkhaus, D-Sunset, won approval of $575,000 to match $1.2 million in federal funds for a satellite jail annex to the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center; $50,000 for construction of a pavillion in the town of Washington; and $985,000 for a road overlay project.

Sen. Cleo Fields, D-Baton Rouge, got the committee nod for a number of projects at Southern University's Baton Rouge campus. Most of the projects are related to the university's sports programs.

The SU projects include $75,000 in planning money for an Institutional Advancement Complex, $278,000 for five lighted tennis courts, $761,000 for a baseball stadium, and $269,000 for planning for an addition to A.W. Mumford Stadium.

Projects inserted by Sen. J.J. Jumonville, D-Ventress, included $500,000 for construction of an overpass in Addis; $5.25 million for a tri-parish (Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge and Iberville) drainage and pump project to alleviate flooding; and $185,000 to purchase property for the Memorial Area Vocational Institute in Pointe Coupee.