The House Appropriations Committee Thursday approved spending up to $3 million for enforcing tough new drunken driving laws, even though the Legislature hasn't considered how to raise the money.

"We don't know where the money is coming from," Treen administration spokesman Cyrus Greco told the committee.

Greco later acknowledged that the Legislature may be wary of increasing fees and taxes during its current special session. But, he said: "The governor is committed to funding this bill any way he can do it."

Other committees will handle legislation to raise fees or taxes that could finance the local aid program, and the full House and Senate must approve the entire package for it to take effect.

The Appropriations Committee nevertheless endorsed HB70, which would give $3 million to the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission to distribute among local government agencies in need of aid in handling tough new penalties for driving while intoxicated.

"I don't think we should be putting a blank check on the floor of the House," Rep. Elias 'Bo' Ackal, D-New Iberia, said in opposing approval of the bill before bills providing ways to raise the money began moving through the Legislature.

"It's not a blank check. It just sets up a fund," chairman Kevin Reilly, D-Baton Rouge, said.

Reilly said the brevity of the current 16-day special legislative session demands that bills be processed as quickly as possible. He said the bill would have no effect if the Legislature fails to provide a way to finance it.

The new law requires, among other things, that persons convicted of drunken driving for the first time spend at least two days in jail or four days doing community service work. Treen has said some jurisdictions may have difficulty paying for increased prosecution, jailing or supervision of offenders.

The Treen administration, which supported the new drunken driving laws that passed the Legislature last year, hopes to raise money that can be distributed to local police, sheriffs, district attorneys and others involved in enforcing the DWI laws.

Treen had earlier announced that he planned to raise local fees for liquor licenses and permits to fund the program. But Greco said the House rejected a proposed tax increase and a fee increase Thursday, and may not look kindly on raising liquor fees.

The administration has filed other bills that could fund the local aid program with money from DWI fines or increased court costs on DWI cases. Those bills have yet to be considered by the Legislature.

Before passing SB70 on to the full House, the Appropriations Committee agreed to amendments proposed by Greco that would allow other fees, fines or receipts to be used for DWI enforcement.

If the Legislature balks at Treen's proposed fee increases, Greco said, the administration may seek other sources of funding, including federal funds.

In other action, the committee almost routinely approved one of Gov. Treen's solutions for reducing the state's impending budget deficit.

HB34 would transfer 70 percent of the state construction fund's interest account — about $52 million — to the general fund, where it could be used for general expenses of operating state government.

Treen said the state faces a $210 million shortfall in revenues by the end of the fiscal year June 30.