A state capital construction plan that outlines $679 million in spending on highways, buildings and other projects during the new budget year sailed through a House committee Monday.

The plan envisions less than half the $1.49 billion in spending lawmakers approved for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30.

And, a top aide of Gov. Buddy Roemer said the administration does not plan to do all the borrowing envisioned in the bill.

The House Ways and Means Committee considered the bill, HB575, for about 45 minutes before approving it with lawmakers making no substantive changes to the Roemer administration construction plan.

Included is $172.6 million in borrowing to finance projects, $462.47 million in cash spending — mainly federal highway dollars — and $43.76 million in other bond projects for which borrowing has already taken place.

Actually the Roemer administration plans only $104 million in new state borrowing for the 1988-89 fiscal year — meaning the projects in the lowest priority will not get funded, acting Commissioner of Administration Steve Cochran said.

Of that amount, $57 million represents projects for which the state has already advanced cash pending the sale of bonds, he said.

In addition, Cochran said the administration will sponsor an amendment when the bill hits the House Appropriations Committee to strip out
$20 million in cash spending on projects. The appropriations panel must approve cash spending in the bill.

Roemer plans on using the $20 million — which contractors claim the state will save through repeal of the prevailing wage law — in budget balancing efforts.

Cochran assured committee members that the bill reflects projects for which either bonds or cash must be generated during the upcoming fiscal year.

If the administration determines later that a project does not have to be undertaken, Cochran said it will be put on hold.

Rep. Harry Benoit, D-Breaux Bridge, questioned the necessity for a capital construction program in such bad financial times.

"Why are we continuing to spend?" he asked.

Cochran said the administration does not want to be "pennywise and pound foolish." He said some items like highway overlay projects must be done or roads will deteriorate further.

The committee also approved the companion omnibus bond bill, HB576, which outlines projects for which funds are being borrowed.

The capital outlay bill, HB575, now moves to the House Appropriations Committee where the cash spending will be considered.

Area projects included in the capital construction plan include:

- Modifications to Tiger Stadium, $2.1 million, and construction of a student recreation sports center at LSU, $7.925 million. Revenue bonds are scheduled to be sold for the projects.
- Construct aquaculture research center, LSU, $2.48 million.
- Renovate Grandison Dorm, $1.21 million, construct social science building, $6.5 million and construct central utilities plant, $6.1 million, all at Southern University-Baton Rouge. These are projects being done under the federal consent decree for higher education.
- Dredging and deepening of Mississippi River and utility and pipeline relocation and right-of-way acquisition, Ascension, St. James, St. John, Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Charles, Plaquemines, $3.44 million.
- Renovate University of Southwestern Louisiana's Iberia Research Center Buildings C & D, $2 million.
- Port improvements for seafood processing plant, Iberia, $500,000.
- Construction, right-of-way and utilities on La. 66, Angola-Weynoke, West Feliciana, $2 million.
- Construction, right-of-way and utilities, La. 3095, Kaliste Saloom Road, Lafayette, $4.3 million.