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Russian Regions to Get Nearly $1 Billion to Build Roads Next Year

By The Moscow Times

May 31, 2015



Russian regions will get 50 billion rubles ($953 million) in federal subsidies next year to develop their road networks as the country's growing economic crisis slashes local budgets, news agency TASS reported Friday.

"[We have] specified the source for replenishing road budgets next year in the range of another 50 billion rubles," Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov said at a transport forum held in Novosibirsk, TASS reported.

The move is intended to make sure that regional governments continue to make improvements to Russia's infamously poor roads despite reduced funding amid the country's economic downturn.

Russia's federal budget has already been cut by 10 percent almost across the board as low oil prices and Western sanctions over the Ukraine crisis drive the country toward an expected recession this year.

The extra 50 billion rubles will be taken from cash generated by a planned tax on trucks weighing over 12 tons. The new surcharge is set to come into effect in November.

Earlier in May, Sokolov said that the government would give regional authorities 60 billion rubles ($1.1 billion) to help with road construction this year, Vedomosti reported.

The World Economic Forum, a Swiss non-profit foundation, ranked Russia's roads at 124th place out of 144 countries in its 2014-15 Global Competitiveness Report.

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