

# Bateman urges actions to shun property tax hike

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BOISE — The only east Idaho legislator in House majority leadership Tuesday urged all possible steps to avoid a property tax increase.

House Majority Caucus Leader Linden B. Bateman, R-Idaho Falls, said unless the necessary funding is attained to meet the anticipated \$69 million shortfall, the property tax hike is probable.

"We don't want to go to the property tax if at all possible," said Bateman in a Post-Register interview.

Bateman said "imaging what would happen if we put on a 6 cents sale tax increase, or jumping it from 3 to 9 cents."

He said the Legislature must now come up with some major financial proposals to meet the deficit as state government under the constitution is prevented from going into the red.

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"We will need some big items to meet the shortfall," said Bateman.

He then pointed out the Residential Tax Exemption Initiative, or 50-50 as it is familiarly called in referring to 50 percent or \$50,000 home tax exemption, will cause a noticeable shift of some 43 percent tax to business and farmers.

"The people voted the tax exemption initiative so we have go rule that out," said Bateman. "It must be implemented."

Bateman noted the borrowing on state building looks like the most viable proposal at present to raise the big money.

He remarked that New York did this on its subway system and California is also contemplating a similar step on some of its state properties which amount to billions of dollars.