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# UF Experts Weigh In on Economic Recovery Plan

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The U.S. Senate voted to approve the \$838 billion economic stimulus bill on Tuesday, but UF experts have identified aspects of the recovery program they would like to see changed.

Michael Cook, a professor with the Rinker School of Building Construction, said the bill should focus more on building public schools than on infrastructure projects, which include improving highways and bridges.

Cook said more people will appreciate a stimulus plan that spends money on schools rather than infrastructure because the building of schools involves a larger sector of the population.

“In my opinion, there is really no substitute for dollars spent on education,” he said.

UF may indeed now have more money to spend.

Doug Waldo, an associate professor in UF’s department of economics, said funds from the plan that are allocated to Florida would hopefully help reduce UF’s budget cuts.

But Waldo said government officials should focus on bank reform before finalizing the stimulus plan.

The plan will only be useful if the problems in the banking sector are dealt with first, Waldo said.

However, the plan may have a useful effect on Florida’s agricultural industries.

Tom Spreen, chairman of UF’s food and resource economics department, said if the plan works, it could help raise the prices of Florida’s agricultural commodities, such as oranges.

Sam Selikoff, a UF finance senior and teaching assistant for a managerial economics course, does not see the bill in such a positive light.

Selikoff said it makes him nervous that a small group of government officials is making this big economic decision.

However, time and time again, he said, the country has shown that private industry and individuals are the best way to make up for the economic shocks the country experiences.

Ted Kury, the director of energy studies for the Public Utility Research Center at UF, said a national policy should not be dictating the actions of every state.

He said the government is attaching a lot of strings to the stimulus plan.

As of now, the plan is requiring the states to adapt a decoupling of utility companies' revenues, which would cut the bond between sales and revenues.

This means that while utility companies receive a steady revenue via the plan, customers will not necessarily get a lower bill.

The federal government is assuming this plan will work well for all states, he said, adding that this may not be the case.