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Musgrave locks horns with panel's chairman

■ Colorado representative argues about a gasoline tax increase with the leader of the Transportation Committee.

Reporter-Herald file photo

U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave speaks at a campaign appearance in Fort Collins in this file photo. Musgrave says the House Transportation Committee chairman tried to intimidate her during a discussion on the House floor this week.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the House Transportation Committee shouted at U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave and implied he would block federal funds for Colorado in an argument over gasoline taxes, Musgrave's spokesman said Wednesday.

Musgrave, R-Colo., and Rep. Don Young, R-Ala., were talking on the House floor this week about Musgrave's opposition to a gas tax increase when the confrontation occurred, said Guy Short, Musgrave's chief of staff.

Short said Young implied he would block highway funds for Colorado if Musgrave didn't drop her opposition to a gas tax increase. Young jabbed his finger at her during the confrontation, Short said.

Young's spokesman. Steve Hansen, disputed Short's description of the exchange.

"Chairman Young was pointing out the hypocrisy of her requesting in private more than a billion dollars in highway projects, then in public going out and saying she wants to stop increases in highway funding," Hansen said.

He said Musgrave, as a freshman, may not be accustomed to such conversations, but they happen every week among House members. Musgrave was elected in November.

Hansen said Young was pointing at a list of Musgrave's funding requests, not the congresswoman.

"If Mr. Young was trying to communicate that, it was certainly lost in the delivery," Short said. "The outcome is she is more resolute than ever to see the gas tax go away and never be enacted on the taxpayers of the 4th District of Colorado or the American people."

Young is influential in the drafting of a bill to fund transportation over the next six years. He has suggested $375 billion in projects and raising the gas tax as one way to pay for them.

Musgrave sent a letter to House members last week asking them to oppose a gas tax increase, saying it would be counterproductive at a time Republicans are trying to pass President Bush's tax-cut package.

Short said Musgrave has requested more than $1 billion in transportation funding over the next six years because Colorado has not received its share. She recommended toll roads and other means to pay for them.

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Musgrave, House committee chairman tangle over gas tax

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the House Transportation Committee shouted at U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave of Fort Morgan and implied he would block federal funds for Colorado in an argument over gasoline taxes, a Musgrave spokesman said Wednesday.

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— *Associated Press*