

Ohio jobs package revamped in bipartisan compromise

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COLUMBUS (AP) " Legislative leaders struck a deal with Gov. Ted Strickland on a \$1.57 billion package to try to help the state's sagging economy, opting for a plan with less taxpayer-backed debt for the state than Strickland originally proposed.

Voters would be asked to approve \$400 million in bonds on the November ballot " \$200 million in new taxpayer-backed bonds and \$200 million to increase the amount of bonds that are backed by liquor profits. The rest of the money will come from existing streams of state revenue, under the plan announced today.

Money would be invested in alternative energy such as wind, solar and cleaner-burning coal, and \$250 million would go toward increasing the amount of Ohio business internships for college students. The state also plans to invest in land conservation and local infrastructure such as bridges and roads.

Strickland, House Speaker Jon Husted and Senate President Bill Harris reached the compromise after Harris and Husted, both Republicans, balked at the \$1.5 billion in taxpayer-backed debt the state would have taken on in the Democratic governor's original plan. The three appeared together Wednesday to announce the plan.