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### Democratic chairman calls for impact fees

By [James Shea](#)

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The chairman for the Henderson County Democratic Party pressed the county commissioners to institute impact fees. Doug Freeman said developers need to pay for some of the costs associated with development. He said the commissioners and Henderson County School Board Chairman Ervin Bazzle compared the failed land transfer tax referendum to an impact fee, and therefore, should seek the authority to enact the fee. Impact fees are assessed against the cost of development. A formula is used to calculate the increased need for roads, sewers, schools and other infrastructure from a development. The money collected can only be used on capital construction. The North Carolina Legislature has given three counties the authority to implement impact fees, according to North Carolina Association of County Commissioners spokesman Todd McGee. He said only two of the counties have used the authority to institute them. The association would like all of the counties to have the ability to implement impact fees, McGee said. "That has always been our concern," McGee said. "If it is good for one county, it should be good for all." Freeman said Henderson County should work with other counties in the state and press the Legislature to approve impact fees for all the counties. "While the collection of impact fees will not solve all of the financial woes of our county, it would have the effect of, one, holding down future raises in the property tax and, two, placing a substantial portion of the burden of added infrastructure costs due to growth on those most responsible -- the developers," Freeman said at the commissioners meeting Monday. He said the Henderson County Democratic Party recently passed a resolution that asked Henderson County to lobby for impact fees. Freeman said the county Democratic Party would press Western North Carolina Democratic legislatures to support the effort. Chairman Bill Moyer said Henderson County and other counties have pressed the Legislature to approve impact fees for years but nothing has happened. "There is no chance of getting support for impact fees," Moyer said. He said the counties have a better chance of increasing the .25 percent sales tax to one cent. McGee said there is a lot of lobbying effort within state government not to allow impact fee authority for other counties. "The same forces that fought the land transfer tax fight impact fees," McGee said. Sen. Tom Apodaca, R-Hendersonville, said he did not support impact fees. He said it was the wrong approach, because it taxed people for services that many homeowners do not need, like schools. "It is probably worse than a transfer tax," Apodaca said.

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