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Lawmakers set to take \$5-billion bite out of budget

February 19, 2010 | 6:04 pm

Democrats are preparing to move their \$5-billion deficit reduction package to the governor's desk as soon as Monday, with floor votes scheduled in both the Senate and Assembly.

A linchpin of the plan is a raid of public transit money. It includes a provision for local governments to make up the gap by raising fuel taxes on their own. The proposal also calls for a delay in certain tax breaks for large corporations that were passed as part of last year's budget compromise.

Many of the proposals can be passed by a simple majority vote and will not need Republican support. Other provisions, like Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's \$200-million proposal to create a new property tax to pay for emergency response services, would need support from two-thirds of the members of each house before going to the governor's desk.

Among the major targets for spending cuts are the prison healthcare system and plans to reduce payments to state workers by up to \$450 million. Most of those cuts would come from jobs being eliminated through attrition.

--Anthony York in Sacramento

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