

BATON ROUGE -- A bill that would give State Police authority to oversee the **Crescent City Connection** police died in a Senate committee Wednesday.

The Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works voted 3-1 to bottle up House Bill 493 by Rep. **Patrick Connick**, R-Harvey. The bill is dead for the session unless he can find a way to amend its contents onto a related bill.

"I am not going to give up on this," Connick said after the meeting.

Voting to kill the bill were Sens. David Heitmeier, D-Algiers; Willie Mount, D-Lake Charles; and Dale Erdey, R-Livingston. The only vote against killing the bill came from Sen. Buddy Shaw, R-Shreveport. Sens. Robert Adley, R-Benton; Joe McPherson, D-Woodworth; and Butch Gautreaux, D-Morgan City, were absent for the vote.

Connick said his bill was designed to restore faith in the bridge's police force by placing it under the jurisdiction of State Police. He said no police jobs would be lost but State Police Superintendent Mike Edmonson would have the power to better deploy existing officers.

Audits have indicated there has been lax supervision of the New Orleans-based division by the Department of Transportation and Development, the span's parent agency.

Department officials admit there have been problems with the bridge operations but said they have moved to correct them, including better monitoring of the bridge division.

Heitmeier pointed out that a study was done indicating that State Police and New Orleans area police agencies have indicated the bridge police are better equipped to handle traffic and other bridge-related problems, and at a lower cost to the taxpayer than State Police.