

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

February 2017

New Road Usage Fee Bill Proposed

New legislation for a proposed road usage fee was heard in the House on February 1st. House Bill 621 would establish a road usage fee at the time of vehicle registration based on the equivalent miles per gallon of the vehicle. The proposal mandates that the collected fees would be restricted to a separate road usage account within the highway fund, and an appropriation would be made to the Department of Safety for administrative costs. The new bill was a result of the commission to study revenue alternatives to the road toll.

Under the proposal, vehicles that meet an MPG range of 22.5 or less would be exempted from the fee, while owners with vehicles over that baseline would pay a fee correlated with their MPG. Any owner of an alternative fuel vehicle, such as an electric car, would pay an annual road usage fee of \$123.33. Below are charts included in the new legislation.

MPG Range	Average MPG	Gallons Per Year	Road Toll	Road Usage Fee
22.5 or Less	22.5	555.6	\$123.33	\$0.00
22.5 - 25	24	520.8	\$115.63	\$7.70
26 - 30	28	446.4	\$99.11	\$24.22
31 - 35	33	378.8	\$84.09	\$39.24
36 - 40	38	328.9	\$73.03	\$50.30
41 - 45	43	290.7	\$64.53	\$58.80
46 - 50	48	260.4	\$57.81	\$65.52
51 or More	60	208.3	\$46.25	\$77.08
No Fuel	N/A	N/A	\$0.00	\$123.33

MPG Range	Number of Vehicles	Road Usage Fee	Total Fee Revenue
22.5 or Less	482,285	\$0.00	\$0
22.5 - 25	98,244	\$7.70	\$756,479
26 - 30	133,968	\$24.22	\$3,244,705
31 - 35	107,174	\$39.24	\$4,205,508
36 - 40	34,832	\$50.30	\$1,752,050
41 - 45	17,862	\$58.80	\$1,050,286
46 - 50	17,862	\$65.52	\$1,170,318
51 or More	693	\$77.08	\$53,416
No Fuel	200	\$123.33	\$24,666
Total	893,120		\$12,257,427
(Less: Registration Agent Fees)			(\$411,000)
Subtotal			\$11,846,427
(Less: Block Grant To Municipalities)			(\$1,421,571)
Net Revenue			\$10,424,856

Representative Norm Major first proposed the concept of a road usage fee last year as a way to ensure all users are paying a fair share in road maintenance fees whether they drive a gasoline-fueled vehicle, a hybrid, or an alternative fueled vehicle. In the original bill, the miles per gallon cut off was 20 rather than 22, and the fee for a fully alternative fuel vehicle was \$149.85. The bill was voted to interim study in 2016. On February 10th, the House Ways & Means Committee voted HB 621 Ought to Pass by a vote of 20-1.



A SAFER ROAD
TO TOMORROW

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Safer Road Partners

Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire

The Associated General Contractors is a non-profit trade organization of general contractors, subcontractors, and industry professionals dedicated to improving industry standards.

NH Good Roads Association

NH Good Roads Association is a non-profit trade organization established to encourage the development of a safe, efficient and environmentally sound highway transportation system.

Safety and Health Council of Northern New England

The Council's mission is to educate and promote safety & health policies, practices and procedures that prevent and mitigate human economic losses arising from unintended causes.

NH Association of Chiefs of Police

The Association secures a close relationship among commanding officers all over the state, to encourage a cooperative relationship among all police officials.

NH Lodging & Restaurant Association

The Association is a non-partisan organization to promote, protect and educate the food service and lodging industries and to ensure positive business growth for our members.

Business & Industry Association

The Association is NH's leading business trade association. It advocates for business interests with state and federal legislators and regulators.

NHDES Seeks Settlement Funds for Volkswagen Clean Air Act Violations

The U.S. EPA and the California Air Resources Board recently reached a settlement with Volkswagen and its related companies for allegations for violations of the Clean Air Act related to certain diesel vehicles. Under the settlement, states like New Hampshire could receive money for environmental projects. NHDES sought public input on the use of settlement funds that may potentially come to NH. The comment period ended February 10th. The input received will be used to help NHDES draft the required Beneficiary Mitigation Plan.

Should the State of NH decide to become a beneficiary, NHDES will provide an additional opportunity for public comment on a proposed Beneficiary Mitigation Plan. Any public comment opportunity will be posted on their web page.

Background Information: On Jan. 4, 2016, the U.S. filed a complaint against Volkswagen alleging violations of the Clean Air Act. The complaint alleged that approximately 580,000 model year 2009-2016 diesel vehicles manufactured by Volkswagen Group of America Inc., Volkswagen AG, Volkswagen Audi AG, Porsche AG and Porsche Cars North America emitted levels of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) that were as much as 40 times the federal standard.

On June 28, 2016, Volkswagen entered into an agreement in the form of a Partial Consent Degree to address the 2.0 liter vehicles on the road and the associated environmental consequences resulting from the past and future excess emissions from these vehicles. The agreement, finalized in October 2016, requires Volkswagen:

- Invest \$2,000,000,000 over a period of up to 10 years (\$1.2 billion in areas outside of California) on actions to support increased use of technology for Zero Emission Vehicles.
- Pay a total of \$2,700,000,000 to fund environmental mitigation projects to reduce emissions of NOx where the subject vehicles were, are, or will be operated.
- Implement a buyback/lease-termination/vehicle modification program, estimated to cost up to \$10,033,000,000 that is designed to remove from commerce and/or perform an approved emissions modification on at least 85% of the subject 2.0 liter vehicles no later than June 30, 2019.

More information on DES's efforts can be found on their website: <http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/tsb/tps/msp/diesel-vehicles/vw-settlement.htm>

As Traffic Volumes Increase, U.S. Highways Turn to Innovative Interchange Designs



Interchanges across the country are undergoing a design shift from split, head-to-head configurations toward more semi-continuous designs such as diverging diamond interchanges (DDI) and roundabouts. Today's roadways need to accommodate for an ever-increasing number of motorists. The first half of 2016 saw vehicle miles traveled in the country reach a record high of 1.58 trillion miles. This astonishing growth rate means that it's time to rethink intersection design.

The main advantage of DDIs is that their designs eliminate conflicting left turns through opposing traffic. This key feature improves safety and traffic flow. These kinds of configurations have been built or planned in at least 29 states since the first one was built in 2009 in Missouri. That project finished \$7 million under budget while still making use of an existing bridge.

Temporary DDIs have also been used handle lane changes and switchovers that are implemented during the construction process. These diverging diamond configurations have helped move traffic and relieve congestion at construction sites with limited space for travel.

For decades, roundabouts have been used in lower-volume intersections across the country. In a roundabout, vehicles move counterclockwise, with incoming traffic yielding to vehicles already in the intersection. The design eliminates turns going against traffic and replaces them with slower merging traffic patterns. According to the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, intersections that have been converted to roundabouts have a 35 percent reduction in total crashes and a 76 percent reduction in injuries. Additionally, like DDIs, roundabouts are relatively easy and cheap to construct.

Source: "U.S. highways are shifting to alternative interchange designs" by EquipmentWorld.com.

Governor Sununu Includes Transportation Funding in 2017 Budget Address

On February 9th, Governor Chris Sununu gave his much-awaited 2017 Budget Address before the NH Legislature. In his speech, he laid out three major goals:

- First, to create a fiscal and regulatory environment that promises greater job growth, job retention, workforce development and economic opportunity for all.
- Second, to both enhance and strengthen opportunities and services for our children and families.
- And third, to improve the safety and well-being of New Hampshire’s all citizenry.

Governor Sununu took a strong stance in favor of infrastructure investment. “Any surplus beyond increasing our Rainy Day Fund to a total of \$100 million, will be placed in a newly created Infrastructure Revitalization Fund. And barring unexpected expenses, savings beyond those funds will be sent directly to our local communities.” He went on to mention the need for road and bridge repair, stating, “For years we have heard how the state cannot control local property taxes, but what we can do is use infrastructure grants to give our towns more financial flexibility and target key areas of need to our communities. Specifically, we’re going to double grants to towns for roads and bridges – a chronic deferred maintenance issue in NH at the local level.”

The Governor also confirmed there would be no new income or sales tax, and no fees or taxes of any kind would be increased. He also touched upon boosting school building aid.

“Through good management practices and controlling wasteful spending as we close out the current fiscal year, we are hopeful that by the end on June we will have filled in the budget gaps we inherited and bring the balance back into the black.”

The speech can be read in full here: <http://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/speeches/budget-2017.htm>

Driving Toward Zero Roadway Fatalities in New Hampshire

The New Hampshire Traffic Safety Commission recently released a report on motor vehicle fatalities in the state. The chart below, dated January 30, 2017, shows data surrounding fatal motor vehicle crashes compared to previous years. So far this year, fatalities appear to be down in comparison to 2016

Totals		FATAL MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES	Same period last year	2017 to date
2015	2016			
103	130	Crashes for January 1, 2017 to January 29, 2017	11	8
114	136	All Persons Killed	11	8
58	76	Operators Killed	7	6
0	2	16 & 17 Year-Old Operators Killed	0	1
9	8	71+ Year-Old Operators Killed	2	1
15	18	Adult Occupants Killed	0	0
1	2	Child Occupants Killed	0	0
6	6	Fatal Involving Commercial Vehicles	0	0
23	17	Motorcycle Operators Killed	0	0
3	1	Motorcycle Passengers Killed	0	0
1	1	OHRV Operators Killed	0	0
3	2	Adult Bicyclists Killed	0	0
29605	22646	Total "Reportable" Crashes Reported (entered into system)	368	255

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation has a page on their Transportation Management Center website dedicated to New Hampshire Driving Toward Zero. The organization aims to eliminate fatalities on roadways across the state. For more information, visit <http://www.nhtmc.com/dashboard/safety>



A Safer Road to Tomorrow
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Bow, NH 03304

Colorado Announces Pay-by-Mile Pilot Research Study

The Colorado Department of Transportation recently announced a new pilot study that may replace the state's gas tax with a pay-by-mile fee. The four-month study, called the Colorado Road Usage Charge Pilot Research Study, launched in December and would establish a fee for miles traveled per month instead of the state's \$.22 a gallon gas tax.

According to the department, the pilot study is just the first step in the process of assessing the new model alongside other fundraising alternatives. Drivers that get about 20-25 miles per gallon won't see a difference in fees. Owners of highly fuel-efficient vehicles, such as hybrids or electric cars, will be the ones paying the most in fees.

Some of the study's research topics include mileage reporting technologies and the manual reporting option, how these technologies work in Colorado's environment, and the differences of driving habits between rural and urban drivers. The pilot study began in December and is set to end in spring of 2017.

Source: "CDOT looks at pay-by-mile charge for Colorado drivers" by Christine Noel, NBC News 9 <http://www.9news.com/traffic/cdot-looks-at-pay-by-mile-charge-for-colorado-drivers/350878509>

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