

# A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

April 2018

## Road Usage Fee Bill Passes House



On March 22, the most recent legislation on implementing a road usage fee, HB 1763, passed the full House by 168-152 and will now move on to the Senate. The bill would require motorists to pay an annual fee based on vehicle efficiency. As currently written, owners of cars that have an EPA average of over 20 MPG would be subject to a fee, which would be adjusted accordingly.

Currently, owners of hybrid or alternative fueled vehicles pay little to nothing in fuel taxes, while still using the same roads and contributing to the infrastructure wear and tear. The concept aims to create a more fair and sustainable system of raising funds for New Hampshire's infrastructure needs as more Granite Staters turn to high-mileage and electric vehicles.

House Bill 1763 states that any vehicle that gets 20 MPG or less will not be subject to a road usage fee, as they already contribute approximately \$111 per year in fuel taxes. The road usage fee for all other vehicles would be \$111 minus the New Hampshire fuel tax rate paid per year based on 10,000 miles of travel. Miles per gallon would be based on 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, and 51+. Hydrogen or electric car owners, who currently pay nothing in fuel taxes, will pay the full \$111.

Representative Kenneth Weyler of Kingston spoke on the House floor in support of the legislation. He argued that other methods of increasing revenue, such as increasing the gas tax, would be regressive. Those with higher MPG rates, he explained, would save more money through this system than through another gas tax increase.

Passing the House floor is the farthest a road usage fee bill has made it in the NH legislature. In 2016, the first version of the bill was sent to interim study, and in 2017, an updated version was proposed, which was tabled by the House. Additionally, the Governor shut down a proposal last December to increase tolls in the state via the ten year plan, and in March, the House overturned a bill that would require registration fees for hybrid and electric cars (HB 1541). The road usage fee is presently the most viable option for fixing our state's deteriorating roads and bridges.

Last year, Safer Roads released a booklet prior to the 2018 legislation called "Leveling the Playing Field in Transportation Funding", which explains the concept of a road usage fee. In addition to providing data on the rising popularity of hybrid and electric vehicles in the state, the booklet also offers different options for creating a fair and reasonable formula for the fee. The booklet is available on [www.saferoadsnh.com](http://www.saferoadsnh.com).



A SAFER ROAD  
TO TOMORROW  
*Safety • Quality of Life • Economic Development*

### 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.

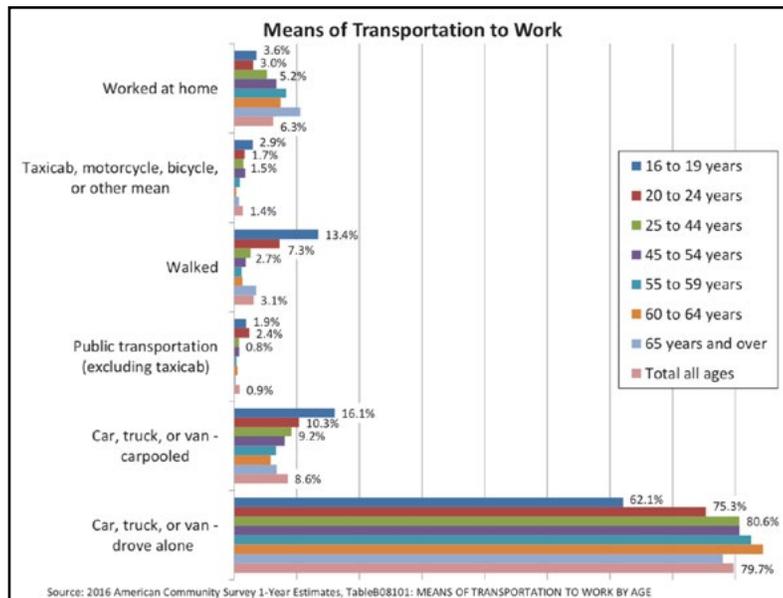
#### Business & Industry Association

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

## How New Hampshire Workers are Getting to Their Jobs

The February issue of the New Hampshire Employment Security (NHES) newsletter, New Hampshire Economic Conditions, highlights workforce challenges facing millennials compared to other generations. The newsletter also delves into how the different age groups commuted to work in 2016. “Statewide, almost 80% of all workers drove alone in a single vehicle, while less than one percent of all workers used public transportation. Outside of major cities in the state, there is little to no public transportation available.”

In 2016, those aged 16 to 19 were the least likely to commute to work alone, at 62.1%, while 25 to 44-year olds were the most likely, at 80.6%. As the chart below shows, millennials age 20 to 24 were more likely to rideshare or walk to work than the older age groups.



The full newsletter can be downloaded on the NHES website here: <https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/ec.htm>.

## U.S. DOT Awards NH \$10M in TIGER Grant Funds

The U.S. Department of Transportation recently announced the FY 2017 awards from the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER grant program. A total of \$487 million was directed to 41 projects in 43 states.

The announcement includes \$10 million in TIGER Grants for a \$35.6 million bridge reconstruction and widening project on I-89. According to the department’s website, the project replaces the deck and superstructure of the two bridges carrying I-89 over the Connecticut River between Lebanon, NH and Hartford, VT, in addition to repairing and rehabilitating the existing substructures. The bridges will be widened to accommodate an auxiliary lane in each direction, full-width shoulders, and a median wall.

Both existing bridges are currently classified as structurally deficient and are functionally obsolete. Repairing the bridges now will reduce long-term maintenance and rehabilitation costs that would be needed to keep the bridges in service. The bridges also carry a high volume of passenger and freight traffic, and without repair, weight limits would be imposed, resulting in costs to detoured traffic. The bridge repair will allow for the continued mobility of passenger and freight traffic across the Vermont/New Hampshire border.

Since its inception in 2009, the TIGER program has provided \$5.6 billion to 463 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. TIGER grant funding has been highly popular since its inception with over 12 dollars in requests made for every dollar available. Funding for the program relies on general funds rather than the Highway Trust Fund.

The full list of states can be found here: [https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/policy-initiatives/tiger/306331/t9-fact-sheets\\_0.pdf](https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/policy-initiatives/tiger/306331/t9-fact-sheets_0.pdf)

## ***The 2019-2028 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan***

On March 15th, HB 2018, the Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan, passed the House and will now move on to the Senate. This year, a number of controversial issues were proposed, such as a rail study and a toll increase.

### **Ten Year Plan Process**

New Hampshire RSAs require that the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) propose a plan for improvements to the state's transportation system every two years. According to the department's website, the purpose of the plan is to develop and implement a strategy allowing NH to fully participate in federally supported transportation improvement projects as well as to outline projects and programs funded with state transportation dollars.

Here is a timeline of the ten-year plan process:

- April 2017 – Community outreach and regional prioritization by RPCs
- July 19th – Initial meeting of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT)
- August 2017 – Meetings with RPCs Executive Directors
- August 23, 2017 – Draft TYP (2019-2028) Release
- September-October 2017 – 19 Public Hearings
- November 2017 – GACIT meetings & revisions
- December 2017 – Toll hearings, Governor's review & revisions
- January 15, 2018 – Governor's Draft TYP transmittal to Legislature
- January-May 2018 – Legislative review & revisions
- June 2018 – Final TYP (2019-2028) Adopted into law

Having passed the House, this year's plan is currently in one of the final stages of the process – legislative review and revisions.

### **Toll Increase Proposal**

In December, the GACIT was considering a proposal to increase tolls in the state. Governor Sununu released a statement that while he did not support the increase, he planned to allow the council to consider the proposal. After the hearings the Council intended to pass the toll increase by 3-2, but the governor excluded it from the agenda, preventing the council from voting on it.

The increase would have accelerated turnpike construction projects, including the Bow-Concord I-93 widening and the Nashua-Bedford F.E. Everett Turnpike widening. According to the DOT, it would have generated approximately \$36 million annually, with the rate per mile would remain 60% below the national toll average. The slide below appears in the DOT's overview presentation to the House Public Works Committee.

### **Rail Study**

This year's highway plan includes a controversial rail study. There were proposals to remove it, but the most recent amendment restores rail and adds the design and development of a financial plan for bus service expansion. Additionally, the amendment authorizes the department to construct and implement all electronic tolling to the existing Dover-Rochester toll plaza locations, and if financially feasible, to the Bedford toll plaza in the Bedford-Merrimack project.

### **Overview Reports**

The NHDOT keeps all of its ten year plan meeting notes, summaries, and draft plans available for download on their website, <https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/typ/index.htm>.

The page includes a link to the Draft Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan Overview that was presented to the House Public Works and Highway Committee in January. The document outlines the GACIT process, the current state of New Hampshire's infrastructure, road and bridge funding needs, and the Governor's changes to the plan. The department has also released its 2018 "The Color of Money" report, although it's not yet posted on the website. Since the federal government restricts the DOT's funds, the report lays out how much can be spent on airports, rail, the turnpike system, and state highway projects. The report also addresses concerns over future road and bridge conditions, which are expected to continue to



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## ***Number of Older Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes Increasing Across Country***

A new national report released by the Transportation Road Information Program (TRIP) identifies states with the highest number and share of older drivers, states with the highest fatality and crash rates involving older drivers, strategies to help aging motorists remain mobile, and recommended transportation improvements.

According to the report, *Preserving the Mobility and Safety of Older Americans*, from 2012 to 2016, the rate of increase in the number of fatalities in crashes involving at least one driver 65 and older was twice as high as the rate of increase in overall fatalities, and the number of drivers 65 and older killed in crashes increased by more than 20 percent during the same period. In the last decade, the number of licensed drivers 65 and older has surged – increasing nearly 40 percent.

TRIP's report also looks at emerging options for enhancing the mobility of older Americans and provides recommendations for improving the mobility and safety of older Americans. The report can be downloaded in full here: [http://www.tripnet.org/docs/Older\\_Americans\\_Mobility\\_TRIP\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](http://www.tripnet.org/docs/Older_Americans_Mobility_TRIP_Report_2018.pdf)

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