



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

**March 21, 2017**

### **Lawmakers target ways to fix state roads; gas tax part of bigger strategy**

The Republic  
Mark Webber  
3/20/17

Conversations are occurring among Indiana legislators about reducing a proposed state gasoline tax to fund infrastructure, Bartholomew County residents learned in Monday's Third House legislative session. The original proposal for a 10-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax increase was made after the Indiana Department of Transportation announced last year it needed an additional \$1.2 billion for road and bridge repairs, as well as related infrastructure. But since House Bill 1002 was introduced in this year's General Assembly, lawmakers have earmarked about \$300 million in sales tax income to roads and bridges, which could reduce the amount of revenue needed from a gasoline tax, said State Rep. Milo Smith, R-Columbus. In addition, State Sen. Greg Walker, R-Columbus, said he met last week with Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee chairman Brandt Hershman, R-Buck Creek, to talk about phasing in a gasoline tax increase that would be smaller at the start than the 10-cent-per-gallon hike included in House Bill 1002. Speaking to about 40 people during the Third House meeting at Columbus City Hall, Walker said he is concerned that some lawmakers would attempt to divert revenue from a gasoline tax to pay for programs unrelated to roads and bridges. "We can probably be more moderate in bringing in some of those increases, so we don't get some of the wants ahead of some of the needs," Walker said. A gas tax increase will take a larger percentage of income from low-income earners than from high-income earners, audience member Sharon Kreig of Columbus told the lawmakers.

[http://www.therepublic.com/2017/03/21/talks\\_underway\\_to\\_modify\\_gas\\_tax\\_plan\\_for\\_state\\_infrastructure\\_needs/](http://www.therepublic.com/2017/03/21/talks_underway_to_modify_gas_tax_plan_for_state_infrastructure_needs/)

### **Editorial: Gasoline tax? Yes ... Toll roads? No thanks**

The Herald Bulletin  
3/19/17

There's one consensus that state senators and representatives have reached during this session of the Indiana General Assembly. Whether Republican or Democrat, legislators believe the state must find a way to fund infrastructure for Indiana's aging roads for the next 20 years. There's a way to fund the projected new \$1.2 billion annually that fairly impacts all users of roads, and is transparent in future handling of the contentious issue of establishing more toll roads in Indiana. First, drivers must pay their fair share. Gas users would see a 10-cent a gallon increase in the gasoline tax from 18 cents to 28 cents; diesel would go up a dime also. Both would go up 1 cent each year through 2025. Those state revenues must go into road infrastructure and not be placed in reserve to cover other budget shortfalls. In addition, drivers of electric cars would pay \$150 annually as their share of road costs. Drivers of other electric vehicles would also see an increase in the price of their alternative fuel decal fees. Although this provision may seem to discourage consumers from pursuing more efficient vehicles, they too use Hoosier roads. This taxation process must remain transparent. For that reason, the Indiana General Assembly should drop from consideration a provision that puts the responsibility and decision-making for toll roads into the hands of the governor. As the mood has been around the Statehouse: It is easier to bribe one governor than 150 legislators. The General Assembly should retain its role in enacting statutes that impact toll roads. The state also

should not pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to an outside engineering firm to evaluate the feasibility of toll roads. [http://www.heraldbulletin.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-gasoline-tax-yes-toll-roads-no-thanks/article\\_7cf6dd30-79f7-5812-897c-e6d8ae63ca83.html](http://www.heraldbulletin.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-gasoline-tax-yes-toll-roads-no-thanks/article_7cf6dd30-79f7-5812-897c-e6d8ae63ca83.html)

### **Legislators: Base gas tax on those who use roads, pay for the roads**

Banner Graphic

Eric Bernsee

3/19/17

In a sense, Hoosier drivers can see the disrepair and feel the need for road work as they thump along over deteriorating Indiana highways. But that doesn't mean that House Bill 1002 is a sure thing for passage in the current session of the Indiana General Assembly. The bill, currently under discussion in the State Senate, proposes a 10-cent increase in the state gasoline tax, which presently is 18 cents per gallon and has not been raised since 2003. At the third and final Legislative Update session of the year on Saturday at the Farm Bureau office in Greencastle, legislators representing Putnam County all agreed with the notion that, as District 24 State Sen. John Crane (R-Avon) articulated, "Those who use the roads should pay for the roads." In fairness, however, that would require creating a user fee of some sort, which seems impractical to implement. Still, the philosophy, District 44 State Rep. Jim Baird (R-Greencastle), said is that "those who use the roads the most, pay the most." Baird also dashed a theory that interstate truckers can fill up their tanks in Illinois and drive right through Indiana without contributing to the cause. Conversely, that is one reason why, Baird said, "when truckers drive through, they keep a logbook on how many miles that have driven in our state. So we're getting that revenue too."

<http://www.bannergraphic.com/story/2395795.html>

### **Bill aims to levy tax for infrastructure improvements**

Post-Tribune

Javonte Anderson

3/16/17

Hoosiers are pushing back on a roads plan that includes a new tax and a vehicle registration fee to pay for infrastructure improvements. Representatives from groups including the Indiana Family Institute and Americans for Prosperity said raising gasoline taxes should not be a solution for improving roads and bridges, adding that it risks tarnishing Indiana's brand, according to the Associated Press. "The policies that conservatives say we believe in — we say lower taxes broaden the base, increase revenue — those things have happened here in Indiana," said Justin Stevens, the state director for Americans for Prosperity. He said Indiana would take a step backward if the bill passed, as is. The proposal by Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, would increase gas taxes by at least 10 cents per gallon, impose a new \$15 annual vehicle registration fee and give the governor stronger authority to levy roadway tolling. Soliday did not respond to several requests for comment. Democrats, too, have expressed their dissatisfaction with the gasoline tax and vehicle registration fee on Hoosiers while neglecting to pull money from the state reserve funds with a balance of more than \$2 billion.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-indiana-road-tax-st-0316-20170315-story.html>

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