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*I cover tax: paying tax is painful but reading about it shouldn't be.*

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# AAA: Most Americans Support Federal Gas Tax Increase If It Leads To Better Roads

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If those giant potholes and crumbling bridges are causing you concern, you're in good company: a [recent survey](http://newsroom.aaa.com/2014/06/two-thirds-americans-believe-federal-government-increase-transportation-spending/) commissioned by [AAA](http://www.aaa.com) found that just over two-thirds (68%) of Americans believe that the federal government should be spending more on roads, bridges and mass transit systems. Only five percent of those surveyed thought that the federal government should spend less, while the remainder (24%) thought that funding should remain the same.

Of course, money, unlike pieces of crumbling bridges, doesn't fall from the sky. To make improvements would likely require a boost in the federal highway tax. More than half of those surveyed (52%) would be prepared to pay more at the pump for improvements.

How much? Of those 52%, most would be willing to pay an additional \$10 or more per month for better transportation infrastructure. Currently, U.S. drivers pay about \$8 per month in federal gas taxes.

The current federal tax on gas is 18.4 cents per gallon (24.4 cents per gallon for diesel) with states adding in an additional 8 cents to 50.6 cents per gallon depending on where you buy your gas

(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillipserb/2013/04/29/which-state-pays-most-in-gas-taxes/>) (quick look: Alaska is the least expensive while New York is the most expensive).

Why does that number feel so low, at least compared to the overall cost of gas? We haven't had an increase in awhile. In fact, Congress hasn't raised the federal gas tax in more than twenty years: the last boost came in 1993. You can read more about the [history of the federal gas tax here](http://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillipserb/2013/06/06/federal-gas-tax-passes-another-milestone-what-is-the-future/) (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillipserb/2013/06/06/federal-gas-tax-passes-another-milestone-what-is-the-future/>).



*SIGN OF THE PAST IS THIS ABANDONED GASOLINE PUMP WITH A PRICE OF 29.9 CENTS PER GALLON. THE COST OF FUEL HAS MADE... – NARA – 555508 (Photo credit: Wikipedia)*

Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) has suggested that it's time to change that. He has [proposed an increase \(http://www.nhregister.com/general-news/20140530/us-sen-chris-murphy-proposes-federal-gas-tax-hike-for-infrastructure-improvements\)](http://www.nhregister.com/general-news/20140530/us-sen-chris-murphy-proposes-federal-gas-tax-hike-for-infrastructure-improvements) in federal gas taxes of 6 cents per gallon in 2015 and another 6 cents per gallon in 2016. That boost of 12 cents per gallon would bring federal gas taxes roughly in line with inflation (18.4 cents in today's money would be 30.19 cents for 2014). Sen. Murphy not yet provided a timeline for introducing his proposal in Congress.

Similar proposals have died over the years, including one from Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) in [2013 \(http://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillipsrb/2013/12/04/will-congress-drive-up-gas-taxes-in-2014/\)](http://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillipsrb/2013/12/04/will-congress-drive-up-gas-taxes-in-2014/) that didn't make it out of committee. Former Rep. George Voinovich (R-OH) [made a big push \(http://www.taxgirl.com/voinovich-drives-home-gas-tax-increase/\)](http://www.taxgirl.com/voinovich-drives-home-gas-tax-increase/) for a gas tax increase just before his retirement saying that, "just a few cents could help create jobs, improve our infrastructure and better the climate." His suggestion didn't get very far.

But maybe attitudes are changing. According to the AAA survey, more than half of respondents (51%) would be "significantly or somewhat" more likely to vote for a member of Congress who supports increased federal spending on transportation. Another 27% said that it wouldn't change their mind at the voting both with only 19% saying that a Congressional representative supported increased federal spending on transportation, they would be

“somewhat” or “significantly” less likely to vote for them in the next election.

An overwhelming majority (67%) of those surveyed agree that if funding for roads and bridges should be paid for with taxes on gasoline and diesel consumption. Bob Darbelnet, AAA President and CEO agrees, saying, “Many of us are willing to pay a little more if it means we will have access to better roads, bridges and transit systems.”

Without a boost, the current average cost (<http://newsroom.aaa.com/2014/06/summer-gas-prices-expected-remain-3-55-3-70-per-gallon/>) of regular unleaded gasoline is \$3.67 per gallon across the country (it's \$3.654 in my neck of the woods according to AAA's handy fuel price finder (<http://aaa.opisnet.com/Index.aspx>)). That works out to about a nickel more than on the same date last year. For the remainder of summer – peak driving season – AAA predicts that gas prices are likely to remain near a range of \$3.55-\$3.70 per gallon, which is similar to last summer's range of \$3.47-\$3.67.

(Maybe it's time to consider a Tesla? (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kellyphillipserb/2014/05/15/tesla-continues-to-roll-out-tax-strategies-for-consumers/>))

What do you think? Chime in here:

Would you be willing to pay additional gas taxes to pay for improvements in roads, bridges and mass transit systems? (<http://polldaddy.com/poll/8114043/>) Want more taxgirl goodness? Pick your poison: receive posts by email ([http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify?uri=taxgirlfeed&loc=en\\_US](http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify?uri=taxgirlfeed&loc=en_US)), follow me on twitter ([@taxgirl](http://www.twitter.com/taxgirl)) (<http://www.twitter.com/taxgirl>), hang out with me on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/taxgirl>) or check out my YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/taxgirlvideos>). If you want to keep an eye on documents I've posted, check out my profile on Scribd (<http://www.scribd.com/profiles/show/132280959-kelly-phillips-erb>). And finally, you can subscribe to my podcast (<http://feeds.feedburner.com/TaxgirlPodcast>) on the site or via iTunes (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/taxgirl-podcast/id680197993>) (it's free).



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