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## Congress Should Look Beyond the Gas Tax

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

AUGUST 1, 2015

Lawmakers in Washington are so scared of raising the inadequate federal gas tax that they keep passing [short-term bills](#) to move money from other taxes to fund transportation projects. They should develop the kind of courage legislatures in red states like [Utah](#), [Nebraska](#) and [South Dakota](#) have shown and raise the gas tax.

But even the gas tax will eventually become ineffective at raising sufficient money for road and mass transit systems. That's because as Americans increasingly buy more efficient hybrid and all-electric cars, they will use much less gasoline and diesel. Congress thus needs to consider proposals for putting fees on the number of miles people drive on public roads.

One such worthy proposal comes from Representative Earl Blumenauer, Democrat of Oregon, who has been the most persistent [proponent of](#) increasing the 18.4-cent a gallon excise tax on gasoline and 24.4 cent a gallon tax on diesel — and eventually replacing that tax with a miles-driven fee by 2024.

Such a fee makes a lot of sense. [Show Full Article](#) Gasoline consumption has flattened out in recent years. Last year, the country used 3.3 billion barrels of the fuel, up less than 1 percent from the year before and down 2.3 percent from 2004, according to the [Energy Information Administration](#). Most experts believe gasoline use could decline in the future as automakers

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sell more efficient cars to meet tougher federal fuel economy standards and consumer demand.  
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