



**KENTUCKIANS FOR BETTER
TRANSPORTATION**
WE MAKE KENTUCKY GO

Opinion Submission
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Kentuckians are feeling the squeeze of inflation. From food to fuel to housing, many of our citizens are facing more financial difficulties than ever before. Thankfully, our elected officials are searching for solutions to help Kentuckians get through these tough times. While we applaud broad approaches to help reduce the financial burdens many of us are facing, the long-term success and impact of any potential financial relief measures must be considered.

Governor Andy Beshear made headlines recently for his executive order that suspended an automatic two-cent increase in the gas tax that would have taken effect July 1. While we appreciate the Governor's intent, we don't want to lose sight of the importance of the gas tax—a user fee—and the need for adequate and sustained funding for roads and bridges in the Commonwealth. Providing for transportation infrastructure needs is at the heart of what government is intended to do for its citizens.

By preventing the two-cent increase in July, the average Kentuckian will save roughly one dollar per month at the pump. The road fund, however, is projected to lose over \$35 million from the lost revenue through the end of January and as much as \$60 million per year, if the General Assembly extends the suspension when it convenes in January. This is a notable number considering the infrastructure needs across the state. And this doesn't just impact the state's bottom line. Some of that lost revenue, approximately \$9 million, was supposed to be directed to local governments, of which cities and counties rely on heavily to repair and maintain local infrastructure.

In the 1980s the Kentucky General Assembly created the current funding structure, putting in place automatic triggers to increase the gas tax based on pricing. This mechanism has been successfully used for over forty years. If our elected officials want to set a new precedent and move away from the current road funding structure outlined in Kentucky law, we must look at a new modernized structure instead of short-term fixes that chronically underfund the maintaining and improving of Kentucky's transportation system.

Let's take this opportunity in our time of need to commit to long-term change that will help Kentuckians at the pump while also adequately funding our infrastructure needs. The General Assembly took the first step during the 2022 Legislative Session by establishing electric vehicle fees, and we applaud that action. Electric vehicles seem to be the transportation mode of the future, and we must plan accordingly to build out an infrastructure funding plan to meet our future needs. There's more work to be done, however, and we look forward to working with the Governor and Legislature to ensure Kentucky has the best transportation infrastructure system in the country.

Transportation funding should not be a political issue. Every Kentuckian relies on our infrastructure, whether through direct use or for delivery of goods and services, and every day our infrastructure brings billions of dollars of business into the state. It's time to find a real, long-term solution to properly fund our transportation system in Kentucky, one that makes meaningful change for our Commonwealth. We look forward to working with and supporting our state leaders during this time of transportation funding modernization to move Kentucky forward.