



Washington State Transportation Commission



Dear State of Washington Congressional Delegation
State of California Congressional Delegation
State of Oregon Congressional Delegation

The California, Oregon and Washington State Transportation Commissions support federal efforts to address the severe Highway Trust Fund shortfall. The existing per gallon gas tax structure in place at the federal level is not an adequate and sustainable funding mechanism to maintain our existing transportation infrastructure. States are also experiencing similar transportation funding shortfalls given the increasing fuel efficiencies of vehicles and the decreasing purchasing power due to inflation.

Fortunately, the west coast states of Oregon, Washington and California are serving at the vanguard of innovation in surface transportation funding. Each of our three states has or is operating successful tests, trials and pilot programs demonstrating the capability of a road usage charge (RUC) to replace the fuel tax. The Oregon Department of Transportation operates the nation's first and only full time RUC program – a program that is actively collecting a per-mile fee from drivers today. California has also completed a pilot program, and Washington is undertaking one right now.

Executed properly, the RUC is a fair and transparent funding mechanism to ensure everyone pays their fair share for use of public roadways. Furthermore, as the nation's automotive fleet continues its transition to more fuel efficient and electric or alternatively fueled vehicles, the RUC will allow transportation funding to keep pace with these changes and provide sustainable revenues into the future, regardless of a vehicle's fuel source.

Additionally, each state has been aided by the successful Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives Program (STSFA) to test the interoperability of a RUC between states and at the local level. Oregon has partnered with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to use STSFA funds to demonstrate that cities and counties can implement RUCs in conjunction with a state RUC program. With FHWA support, Oregon, Washington and California are working in partnership to demonstrate that RUC system interoperability between states is possible. These efforts represent the true federal nexus for the STSFA program, and it is our hope that Congress will use this federally-assisted research to inform surface transportation funding policy in the next reauthorization bill.

Washington, California and Oregon have demonstrated that the RUC technology is viable and that RUC programs are ready and waiting to be scaled up. While we appreciate the most recent congressional proposal for a nationwide RUC pilot, we believe the next logical step is congressional direction to:

- 1) Establish a set of nation-wide standards before this kind of program is more broadly deployed, and
- 2) Encourage consideration and implementation of a national RUC system.

To be successful, RUC systems must be interoperable between states, they must provide a customer-friendly administrative process for drivers, and they also must provide much needed revenue for the maintenance, repair and improvement of our roads and bridges. California, Oregon, and Washington are ready and willing to build on the successes and lessons learned of each state's work. We look forward to working with Congress to advance the national discussion on RUC as long-term, sustainable funding for the transportation system that takes care of the nation's interstate system and better supports states in the delivery of their transportation responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Jerry Litt, Chair
Washington State Transportation Commission

Fran Inman, Chair
California Transportation Commission

Tammy Baney, Chair
Oregon Transportation Commission