



February 21, 2008

An Open Letter to the Minnesota Legislature: Oppose Billions in Transportation Tax Hikes!

Dear Legislator:

On behalf of the more than 7,000 Minnesota members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I urge you to oppose any plans for raising taxes in order to underwrite transportation projects. Though there are certainly problems in transportation funding that need to be addressed, raising taxes on hard-working Minnesotans is not the answer.

Elected officials around the nation have raised taxes in the past to make up for budget gaps caused by out-of-control spending, and Minnesota residents shouldn't serve as the latest fiscal crutch for politicians looking for more cash. Minnesotans already suffer from the 11th-highest state and local tax burden in the country. Raising gas taxes and other fees in a state with so many long-distance commuters and rural residents will harm the economy as well as family budgets.

Nonetheless, some legislators are embarking on a publicity campaign in support of an increase of upwards of \$8 billion in gas taxes and other fees over the next 10 years. Such a policy would immediately harm individuals, farms, and businesses that rely heavily on vehicles for transportation.

Though there are challenges in Minnesota's transportation funding, a tax hike is not the solution. Simply stated, there are too many resources and wasteful programs to believe the rhetoric that the state must collect more revenue in order to make ends meet.

For example, there are 13 "fracture critical" bridge structures in Minnesota that need replacement. The cost to do so is roughly \$660 million. And yet, since 1990 the Minnesota Legislature has appropriated \$681 million in today's dollars to subsidize stadium construction for billionaire professional sports team owners and their millionaire athlete employees.

Most Minnesotans would agree, especially in light of recent events, that bridge replacement should take precedence over stadium subsidies. Instead of raising gas taxes and other fees, the Legislature ought to focus on reprioritizing spending.

Sincerely,

Andrew Moylan
Government Affairs Manager