



Let's Talk Gas Tax (Poll)

Posted by [Robert Rapier](#) on September 18, 2006 - 12:05pm

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When I look to our energy future, and consider all of the possible scenarios and how we can potentially transition to a more sustainable way of life, there is no option that makes as much sense to me as taxing gasoline at a much higher rate. I want to open up a dialogue with TOD readers - especially those who don't think this is a good idea - to see if we can work our way through the obstacles that would prevent a gas tax from being enacted.

First, I would like to poll the readers to get an idea of where people stand on this issue. The current federal gasoline tax is \$0.184/gal. How high do you think gasoline taxes should be?

The advantages of having a higher gasoline tax, or more appropriately a fossil fuel, or carbon tax, would be many in my opinion. They include:

- It would obviously lead to conservation, which would help preserve our remaining fossil fuel endowment.
- It would encourage mass transit.
- It would make alternative energy sources more competitive with fossil fuels, without favoring a particular option.
- It would encourage more efficient city planning, and reign in some of the suburban sprawl.
- It would make the price of fossil fuels more reflective of the negative externalities that are not currently priced in (global warming, military expenditures, etc.).
- It would penalize alternative energy sources with low EROEI and reward those processes with higher efficiency.

Of course the most often cited disadvantage is that the tax would hurt lower-income workers the most. I think we can work to give them back a tax credit to offset the additional taxes they pay. If they choose to adopt conservation measures, they will end up with more money in their pockets in the long run, and we will have improved the energy security for the next generation.

So, what do TOD readers think? I am looking for critiques, disagreements, and just general discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of a much higher gasoline tax. I would like to come up with something that is palatable to the majority of people, and I want to push this idea to our political leaders. The knee jerk reaction will almost always be "no new taxes", and this is why I want to work through the issues with TOD readers before I start to push too hard.



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