

Dear Sirs and Madams:

I have been writing my testimony in my mind the last several days where I wax on eloquently about starting at ODOT in 1987 driving a 1971 Pontiac Firebird which got 12 miles per gallon on a good day and comparing and contrasting it to the 2020 Honda Civic I drive today at 38 miles per gallon and then launching into a mathematical symphony comparing gas tax and inflation and whatnot. I have decided to save us all since you know the basic truth – life has changed and we need another funding framework.

The gas tax can no longer sustain our system as it is. My vision from 21 years old to 58 years old has changed and became much wider and more in-depth. The same is true for our transportation system. The transportation system serves us all – drivers, walkers, consumers, transit users etc. and is not just about the miles of pavement put down. Please don't misconstrue my statement, asphalt is still very important and having a snow plowed roadway without massive potholes is important to me. The whole system from pavement to ADA ramps to transit options as well as our commitment to doing the right thing with our communities and climate is important to me.

I believe a reasonable funding package could include a surcharge on electric consumption collected by power providers and transferred to the State coffers for transportation. I targeted electricity for several reasons. We all use electricity to some extent. If you drive a Tesla you use electricity, if you enjoy the sidewalk through main town you use electricity to light your home. A tax credit could be given to the working poor as to not worsen their situation and heavy industrial users could have a graduated scale as to not overly burden them. I believe with our current weight mile tax we have the framework in place to set a collection and auditing process and based upon my electricity bill line items it does appear it would not be overly burdensome for the power companies.

I can imagine this may be seen as sneaking in a new tax but in reality, the gas tax has always been a user fee and the transportation system has many facets now that are not covered by gas powered vehicles only. As our purpose and need expands, so does our collection base need to expand. Should a surcharge replace or supplement the gas tax? I don't know but I trust that you as the Committee will make the best decision you can on the complex issues that face us.

In conclusion I can only say that no matter how cool we looked and how cool we sounded in the 1971 Pontiac Firebird, it is time to let that reality go since it no longer serves our purpose just as the gas tax alone no longer serves our needs. I urge you to strongly consider other methods of funding our transportation system.

Sincerely.

Regina Thompson