



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner



February 12, 2015

The Honorable Gene Chandler, Chairman
House Public Works and Highways Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 201
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: House Bill 460, an act establishing a commission to study revenue alternatives to the road toll for the funding of the state's highways and bridges

Dear Chairman Chandler and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) regarding HB 460 relative to establishing a commission to study revenue alternatives to the road toll for funding the State's highways and bridges. DES supports the formation of this commission and appreciates the inclusion of DES on the commission.

Motor vehicles are the major source of air pollutants that lead to smog formation in New Hampshire, contributing over half of the nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compound pollutants that form ground level ozone pollution. Motor vehicles also account for about one third of New Hampshire's carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, a greenhouse gas that contributes to manmade climate change. Due to the health impacts to our citizens from high levels of ozone and the negative health and environmental impacts of climate change, it is in the best interest of the state to promote the use of cleaner, more efficient advanced technology and alternative fuel vehicles that reduce emissions of ozone-forming pollutants and greenhouse gases. These goals need not be counter to the goal of ensuring adequate funding to maintain our transportation infrastructure.

All vehicles traveling on the roadways contribute to the wear and tear of our transportation network. The fuel efficiency of motor vehicles is increasing rapidly in response to federal fuel economy and greenhouse gas emission standards, thus reducing the road toll collected per vehicle mile. Such efficiency gains will continue through model year 2025 under current federal law, when average fuel economy of passenger cars

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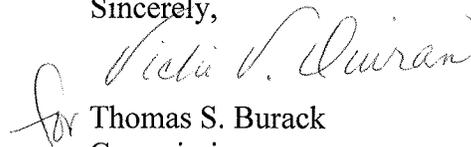
will be over 54 miles per gallon. Furthermore, the New Hampshire Climate Action Plan recommends reducing overall vehicle miles traveled to meet both energy and environmental goals. For these and other reasons, it will be necessary to address the long term impacts of emerging technology vehicles, as well as the impacts of a potential reduction in total vehicle miles traveled, on highway funding.

Preservation of our existing transportation infrastructure provides an environmental benefit by reducing vehicle travel and congestion caused by detours or deteriorated pavement. Additionally, maintaining existing infrastructure uses far less energy than demolishing and rebuilding roadways and bridges that have deteriorated beyond repair, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is important that the State develop a mechanism to allow for equitable accounting of and payment for a vehicle's impact on the roads of the state.

DES has worked collaboratively with other Northeast and mid-Atlantic states to evaluate the environmental impacts of various transportation strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The department appreciates being included as part of this commission and looks forward to sharing information on trends in the Northeast regarding vehicle technologies and transportation-related public policies that may impact New Hampshire.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 515. Please contact Rebecca Ohler (Rebecca.ohler@des.nh.gov, 603-271-6749), or Felice Janelle (felice.janelle@des.nh.gov, 603-271-4848) if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,



for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: HB 460 sponsors