

CA Drivers May Soon Be Charged By Mileage

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More people are driving more gas efficient vehicles and some are even using electric cars, but as drivers buy less gasoline the state gas tax revenues that pay for roads have been falling for a decade. State officials have begun to seriously study a plan to replace California's gas tax with a fee for each mile motorists drive.

State leaders say there isn't enough money to pay to repair failing roads across the state. California's transportation commission reports the state of California has a 296 billion dollars shortfall in road maintenance funding in the last 10 years and California is ranked 45th in the nation in overall highway performance.

Right now, they report 58 percent of California's roadways need to be repaired. these are the reasons they believe a mileage fee for drivers is a must.

Will Kempton/ Executive Director, CA Traffic Commission "Well i think if you look at the fact the public pays what i call a hidden tax in terms of on average in California \$700- \$800 a year in repair costs associated with driving on bad roads it is a bargain to invest money to fix those problems.

Darius Assemi / California Transportation Commission "We've had inflation across the board. Price of milk, price of gas, price of housing. All goods and services have gone up, but the revenue source has not gone up and that's the challenge. We've built new freeways, but we haven't come up with a funding source to maintain them.

Last fall Governor Brown signed a law that set up a commission to study a "road usage charge" and establish a pilot program by January 1st, 2017. Members of that commission met in Fresno this afternoon. State officials told me at that meeting - 15 other states are also looking into road usage taxes. A proposal for a tax here in California is supposed to be established by 2017, but many lawmakers are pushing to move that deadline up to begin repairing roads sooner.