

# Attitudes toward alternative methods of transportation finance: *What do voters think?*

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# Background

- 2006 analysis of transportation finance options for California  
(MTI Report 06-01, Weinstein, Dill, Goldman)

# Support for Finance Options

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Truck-only toll lanes	64%
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HOT lanes	55%
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Toll roads	47%
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Variable reg'n fees	44%
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Express toll lanes	44%
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Gas tax (10¢ over 10 yrs)	40%
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Sales tax (1/2¢)	40%
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Vehicle license fees	40%
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# Support for Each Option

Truck-only toll lanes	64%	Flat registration fees	32%
HOT lanes	55%	General obligation bonds	30%
Toll roads	47%	Indexed gas tax	27%
<b>Variable reg'n fees</b>	<b>44%</b>	Mileage fee	22%
Express toll lanes	44%		
Gas tax (10¢ over 10 yrs)	40%		
Sales tax (1/2¢)	40%		
Vehicle license fees	40%		
Tolls on new lanes	40%		

# General Funding Principles

	% agreeing
Should take into account how much people drive	37%
<i>vs. should be the same for everyone</i>	58%

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	% agreeing
Should take into account how much people drive	37%
<i>vs. should be the same for everyone</i>	58%
Should take into account fuel economy	48%
Should take into account emissions	63%

# Green taxes: What are they?

- Taxes/fees with *rates* that vary by environmental performance
- We can green both existing and new taxes
  - Existing: vehicle registration fees, tolls, parking charges, etc.
  - New: mileage fees, taxes on new vehicle purchases, etc.

# Green taxes: Why?

- May encourage a shift to lower-impact vehicles
- May be more acceptable to the public

# Phone survey (2008)

- 1,500 California adults
- Questions about:
  - Support for 5 taxes and fees
  - Attitudes and knowledge
  - Travel behavior
  - Vehicle driven the most
  - Socio-demographics

# The 5 taxes/fees tested

Flat vehicle registration fee

Green vehicle registration fees

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Flat mileage fee

Green mileage fee

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Feebate program

# Majority support for green taxes/fees

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<b>Tax/Fee</b>	<b>Support (%)</b>
Feebate	65
Green registration fee	63
Green mileage fee	50

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# Green taxes/fees more popular

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<b>Fee</b>	<b>Support (%)</b>	<b>Green option boost</b>
<b>Vehicle registration fee</b>		
Flat	41	→ 22 points
Green	63	

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# Green taxes/fees more popular

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<b>Fee</b>	<b>Support (%)</b>	<b>Green option boost</b>
<b>Vehicle registration fee</b>		
Flat	41	→ 22 points
Green	63	
<b>Mileage fee</b>		
Flat	28	→ 22 points
Green	50	

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Greening boosts support  
among almost all groups

Are some groups more or less supportive?

# What didn't matter (much)?

- Income, gender, ethnicity, age
- Likely voter or not
- Miles driven a year
- "Usual" commute mode

# Demographics / travel / vehicle

Less support from people who:

- Are Republicans
- Haven't used transit, biked, or walked in the last 7 days
- Drive trucks
- Drive the least fuel-efficient vehicles
- Were not concerned with mileage in choosing current vehicle

# Knowledge

Question	Definitely or Probably True %	Definitely or Probably False %	Don't Know	<i>n</i>
"State and federal gas taxes provide all the money that is spent to build and maintain highways and roads in California." (Correct answer: false)	23	63	13	1498
"State and federal gas taxes have not been raised in more than 10 years." (Correct answer: true)	20	49	31	1498

# Knowledge affects support

Less support for green taxes/fees from people who:

- Don't understand how vehicle use impacts the environment
- Think state and federal gas tax rates have been raised in the last 10 years

# Attitudes

- Pro-environment attitudes are a very strong predictor of support
- Importance of the problem

# Policy implications

- Boost public support for new transportation taxes/fees—including mileage fees—by **going green**
- Public education may boost support:
  - Link between car use & climate change
  - Transportation funding

# Issues not addressed

- Do not know if/how green taxes will change consumer behavior
- Implementation issues
  - How to set the fees
  - Adjusting fees over time
  - Will it be more difficult to set rates to achieve revenue objectives?

# Want to learn more?

- Full report available on-line  
MTI Report 08-05  
[www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu)