

FLORIDIANS FOR BETTER



TRANSPORTATION

State Update – April 2, 2004

On April 1st the Florida House of Representatives agreed to a one-month gas tax holiday. But this was no “April Fools Day” joke, a fact made plain when 108 of the House's 120 members cosponsored this tremendously ill-advised proposal!

An \$80-90 million transfer from General Revenue will offset the cost of this amendment. Ironically, Rep. Bob Henriquez, the primary sponsor of this amendment, signed a TRU\$T Pledges promising NOT to divert money from the State Transportation Trust Fund!

Knowing that the original rationale for "sweeping" \$100 million from the Transportation Trust Fund was the State's tight fiscal condition, two questions quickly come to mind:

- ***Then why would the House vote to suspend 10 cents of the gas tax for a month – at a cost of \$80-90 million – and plan to replenish these lost dollars from General Revenue?***
- ***And if we can really afford to do this, then why are we diverting the \$100 million in the first place?***

Simply put, this a stupendously bad idea that would have a devastating impact on our state's transportation system.

No one likes the rise in gas prices we've all seen recently, but let's be clear ... the GAS TAX -- *either at the state or federal level* -- hasn't gone up and is NOT the cause of any increase in the price at the pump!

Even at \$1.79 per gallon, the price of gasoline today is actually cheaper than it was in 1981. According to the Florida Transportation Commission, adjusted for inflation the price of a gallon of regular gasoline in 1981 would be \$2.83 today. The price for a gallon of gas in 1919 is even more than current prices if inflation is taken into account. The 1919 price of a gallon of gasoline would be \$2.75 if expressed in today's dollars.

This is feel-good, election year politics at it's very worst! As the old saying goes, ***there are some politicians, who if their constituents were cannibals, would promise them missionaries for dinner!*** Clearly, that wouldn't be the right thing to do, nor is a 10-cent suspension of Florida's gas tax.

FBT – Your “Voice” for Transportation!

Douglas J. Callaway, President – FBT
136 S. Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301 - (850) 521-1256
dcallaway@bettertransportation.org
www.bettertransportation.org