

2022 March PIN Update

The ASHE PIN is pleased to announce that the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which funds not only the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act but also the entire government, was signed into law by President Biden last Friday, March 11. This is the much needed infusion of funds for the Highway Trust Fund that pulls us away from the fiscal cliff that the ASHE PIN has been writing about for all these years!

However, the passage of the appropriations bill has led to two bills that would affect the traditional gasoline users fee at both the state and federal level. The first bill is in the Ohio State House (Senate Bill 277) introduced by Sen. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City) to reduce the motor fuel tax by 10.5 cents per gallon over a five-year period. It would also cut the diesel fuel tax by 20 cents per gallon. His logic is that the new federal bill will cover the cost of new transportation improvements. However, the monies coming from the new federal bill requires a local match. If Senate Bill 277 is passed, ODOT may not have the match to accept all of the federal monies from the new federal transportation bill.

On the federal level, several House Democrats has introduced companion legislation, the Gas Prices Relief Act, to the Senate bill to temporarily suspend the federal gas tax of 18.4 cents per gallon until January 1, 2023. This is meant to counteract the inflation and the rising gasoline prices due to the Ukraine conflict with Russia. This legislation would be included in a larger economic packaged that is coming together in Congress. This 'tax holiday' would result in an estimated loss of \$20 billion from the already struggling Highway Trust Fund that supports existing state funded projects that are in process. The federal gas tax is collected from the refineries and if passed, there is no guarantee that the price of gasoline at the pump will drop.

The largest project that will be affected by additional federal funding is the Brent Spence Bridge project. Governors Beshear and DeWine have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to apply for bridge funding from competitive grants in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (IIJA) which could take away the need for tolling the project. This is significant progress in moving this critical infrastructure in southwest Ohio forward.

What can ASHE do about these issues? Contact your state and federal representatives and express your concern about these proposed users fee eliminations and/or reductions that would affect the transportation industry. Let them know you support funding the Brent Spence Bridge funding without tolls!