

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 5

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal

February 10, 2011

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 5—Relative to transportation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 5, as introduced, Bonnie Lowenthal. Transportation revenues.

This measure would request the President and the Congress of the United States to consider and enact legislation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility of the collection process for a transportation revenue source based on vehicle miles traveled, in order to facilitate the creation of a reliable and steady transportation funding mechanism for the maintenance and improvement of surface transportation infrastructure.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The primary source of funding for transportation
2 in the United States is derived from a variety of excise and sales
3 taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel collected by either the federal
4 government, or state or local governments; and
5 WHEREAS, The excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel (fuel
6 tax) is not indexed to inflation or any other factor, and as a result,
7 its value erodes with inflation over time; and
8 WHEREAS, While the demand for transportation continues to
9 grow, the value of the fuel tax is diminishing, and is therefore
10 becoming an increasingly inadequate source of revenue to fund
11 transportation projects and programs; and

1 WHEREAS, Aside from inflation, there is a need for the creation
2 of supplements or alternatives to the fuel tax as a source of revenue
3 for transportation projects and programs due to a combination of
4 other factors, including the declining supplies of conventional
5 petroleum-based fuels, increasing numbers of vehicles powered
6 by nonpetroleum-based fuels, and increasing numbers of
7 fuel-efficient vehicles; and

8 WHEREAS, There is growing disparity in the revenue needed
9 to fund the protection and improvement of our transportation
10 system and the revenue available for those purposes; and

11 WHEREAS, Vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) fees have received
12 increasing attention in recent years as a potential supplement or
13 alternative to the fuel tax; and

14 WHEREAS, The most recent multiyear federal transportation
15 authorizations act, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient
16 Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU),
17 established the National Surface Transportation Policy and
18 Revenue Study Commission (commission) to examine the
19 condition and future needs of the nation’s surface transportation
20 system, as well as short- and long-term alternatives to the fuel tax;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, The commission, in its December 2007 report,
23 recommended consideration of a VMT fee; and

24 WHEREAS, Implementing a VMT fee would involve a number
25 of operational, technological, and institutional challenges, including
26 determining the method for calculating the mileage driven, the
27 process by which mileage data is transmitted to a tax collection
28 agency, contingencies to address potential equipment failures,
29 adequate privacy protections, and a strategy for transitioning from
30 the fuel tax to a new method of highway user payment; and

31 WHEREAS, Data on deployment of a VMT fee exists through
32 the State of Oregon’s recent VMT pilot program; now, therefore,
33 be it

34 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
35 *California, jointly,* That the President and the Congress of the
36 United States are respectfully requested to consider and enact
37 legislation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility of the
38 collection process for a transportation revenue source based on
39 vehicle miles traveled, in order to facilitate the creation of a reliable
40 and steady transportation funding mechanism for the maintenance

1 and improvement of surface transportation infrastructure; and be
2 it further
3 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
4 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
5 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
6 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
7 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
8 States.

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