



State of Washington  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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January 21, 2019

The Honorable Patty Murray  
United States Senate  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

We are pleased to submit to you a joint letter signed by the Chairs of the Washington, Oregon and California Transportation Commissions (enclosed). The three West Coast Commissions have met every two years since 2009, to share information, identify opportunities to work collectively together, and to learn how transportation issues common to the three states are being addressed in each state.

The three bodies convened in San Francisco in August 2018 with an agenda focused on technology and transportation. At this meeting, it was agreed to send the enclosed letter to the three West Coast states' combined Congressional delegations, urging consideration of advancing Road Usage Charging nationwide to serve as a long-term, sustainable funding source for our nation's transportation system.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and we stand ready to provide more information on the research and assessment work that has gone on in each of our states, funded in part with federal grant dollars provided under the Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives (STSFA) Program.

Sincerely,

Jerry Litt, Chair  
Washington State Transportation Commission

Enclosure



January 21, 2019

Dear State of Washington Congressional Delegation  
State of California Congressional Delegation  
State of Oregon Congressional Delegation

The California, Oregon and Washington State Transportation Commissions support federal efforts to address the severe Highway Trust Fund shortfall. The existing per gallon gas tax structure in place at the federal level is not an adequate and sustainable funding mechanism to maintain our existing transportation infrastructure. States are also experiencing similar transportation funding shortfalls given the increasing fuel efficiencies of vehicles and the decreasing purchasing power due to inflation.

Fortunately, the west coast states of Oregon, Washington and California are serving at the vanguard of innovation in surface transportation funding. Each of our three states has or is operating successful tests, trials and pilot programs demonstrating the capability of a road usage charge (RUC) to replace the fuel tax. The Oregon Department of Transportation operates the nation's first and only full time RUC program – a program that is actively collecting a per-mile fee from drivers today. California has also completed a pilot program, and Washington is undertaking one right now.

Executed properly, the RUC is a fair and transparent funding mechanism to ensure everyone pays their fair share for use of public roadways. Furthermore, as the nation's automotive fleet continues its transition to more fuel efficient and electric or alternatively fueled vehicles, the RUC will allow transportation funding to keep pace with these changes and provide sustainable revenues into the future, regardless of a vehicle's fuel source.

Additionally, each state has been aided by the successful Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives Program (STSFA) to test the interoperability of a RUC between states and at the local level. Oregon has partnered with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to use STSFA funds to demonstrate that cities and counties can implement RUCs in conjunction with a state RUC program. With FHWA support, Oregon, Washington and California are working in partnership to demonstrate that RUC system interoperability between states is possible. These efforts represent the true federal nexus for the STSFA program, and it is our hope that Congress will use this federally-assisted research to inform surface transportation funding policy in the next reauthorization bill.

Washington, California and Oregon have demonstrated that the RUC technology is viable and that RUC programs are ready and waiting to be scaled up. While we appreciate the most recent congressional proposal for a nationwide RUC pilot, we believe the next logical step is congressional direction to:

- 1) Establish a set of nation-wide standards before this kind of program is more broadly deployed, and
- 2) Encourage consideration and implementation of a national RUC system.

To be successful, RUC systems must be interoperable between states, they must provide a customer-friendly administrative process for drivers, and they also must provide much needed revenue for the maintenance, repair and improvement of our roads and bridges. California, Oregon, and Washington are ready and willing to build on the successes and lessons learned of each state's work. We look forward to working with Congress to advance the national discussion on RUC as long-term, sustainable funding for the transportation system that takes care of the nation's interstate system and better supports states in the delivery of their transportation responsibilities.

Sincerely,



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Jerry Litt, Chair  
Washington State Transportation Commission



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Fran Inman, Chair  
California Transportation Commission



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Tammy Baney, Chair  
Oregon Transportation Commission