

To: House and Senate Transportation Committee  
From: Rep. Bram Kleppner, Chittenden-13  
Subject: Gas tax, mileage tax, flat fee  
Date: April 18, 2026

To the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees:

I believe we need to start with an issue that has nothing to do with fuel efficiency or with electric vehicles: the gas tax is a regressive tax, falling most heavily on low-income Vermonters. It's a double-whammy on low-income Vermonters who live in rural areas, whether they live there by choice or because they cannot afford housing in more populated parts of the state.

Either way, they end up having to drive a lot more miles than other Vermonters simply to get to work, to school, to the grocery store, to the doctor. So they pay a higher percent of their income per gallon than higher-income households, and they use more gallons. It's a triple-whammy if they have older, less efficient vehicles or work vehicles that use more fuel.

I would urge the committees to work with Senate Finance and House Ways & Means to see if there is any way to provide relief from the burden of gas taxes or mileage taxes to low-income Vermonters, wherever they live and whatever they drive.

On the subject of a mileage tax, it seems to me that we probably don't need annual or bi-annual inspections to read the odometer. I believe the technology exists to know exactly how many miles each car drives, and where those miles are. I'd recommend we deploy the technology to automate this process from the get-go, and charge in-state and out-of-state drivers only for the miles they drive on Vermont roads, not on out-of-state roads.

Another shortcoming of a straight mileage charge is that it doesn't capture the immensely different amounts of damage different vehicles do to our roads. My family only has EVs, and they're heavier than gas-powered cars, and do more damage. Heavy trucks do disproportionately more damage yet. So I'd recommend a "per pound-mile" charge, using the gross loaded weight of each vehicle for the pounds.

I'll finish where I started – if we can charge every vehicle by the pound-mile on Vermont roads, and provide relief from these charges to low-income Vermonters, we'll have the fairest, most sustainable road transportation tax system in the land.