



## **AM 4: The Different Voices of Road User Charge & the Path Forward**

### **Moderator**

Jim Madaffer, Chair, California Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee and Commissioner, California Transportation Commission

### **Panelists (in order of their presentation)**

- Steve Finnegan, Manager of Government and Community Affairs, Automobile Club of Southern California and Board Member, Mobility 21
- Honorable Lisa Bartlett, Supervisor, County of Orange and Board Member, Orange County Transportation Authority
- Curt Augustine, Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers
- Eric Sauer, Vice President of Policy and Government Relations, California Trucking Association

## **Summary**

In September 2014, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 1077 into law, requiring the state of California to design and implement a statewide pilot program to study the implications of a road charge model. Road charging means that drivers pay to help maintain the roads based on the distance they travel or the period of time they use the roads rather than the amount of gasoline their vehicles consume. The Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee was created as a result of SB 1077. The state gas tax, \$.18 cents a gallon – has not been raised since 1994 and is no longer able to generate enough money to maintain California's roads. Currently, \$57 billion in funding is needed due to deferred maintenance needs; unfortunately, gas taxes paid at the pump have not kept pace with the needed repairs. This is especially true given today's fuel-efficient automobiles not to mention the increase use of electric vehicles. The audience learned that many of the panelists have concerns about privacy issues - the need to protect data collected was a recurring theme. Other panelists advocated for higher gas taxes in lieu of a road user charge and stressed the need for a technology neutral system so that all vehicles are treated equally. The trucking industry wants to be part of the solution but stressed the need for parity with out-of-state trucks. Concern was voiced on how the road user charge program would be administered; currently, collecting gas taxes is done at the pump. Collecting fees under the pilot program needs to be simple and secure. The need to cautiously move forward without

rushing to solutions was also stressed. Lastly, the audience learned the road user pilot program is seeking 5,000 volunteers to participate in the program. Interested volunteers can sign up at [http://www.dot.ca.gov/road\\_charge/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/road_charge/)

## Takeaway

California is at a critical stage – the gap is widening between revenue and maintenance needs. Gas taxes have not kept up with maintenance needs especially given increased fuel economy. People driving electric cars pay no gas taxes.

Vehicle miles traveled will increase but revenue is lost due to increased fuel economy. By 2025, the average car will get 54.5 miles per gallon of gas.

The Technical Advisory Committee for the Road User Charge Pilot Program has been on a statewide listening tour. Privacy has been the top issue raised. The need to protect data collected is essential.

California has the highest taxes and the worst roads.

Revenue from the Road User Charge Program needs to be protected and used for transportation purposes only.

Program needs to be technology neutral.

No double taxation; miles driven on toll road should be excluded.

Need to ensure that whatever system is in place, it is easy to administer.