

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I reluctantly rise to speak about the issue. I would like to support Senator Hall's amendment and I felt that way when the Appropriations Committee addressed the issue. But it is a tax increase but if you don't...if you don't...if you don't move this along without the amendment, it will be a tax increase and one of the issues I have as a rural senator is people are calling and saying when are we going to fix this road north of such and such a town, or when are you going to fix this road, the road to the new school is not safe, we need shoulders on it. So it is a dilemma, but it is a tax increase and we are one of the highest gasoline tax states in the nation, and people do drive across the borders and buy gasoline. I wish we had General Fund money so we wouldn't have to raise the gasoline taxes, but I had several revenue bills this year and they were all defeated, so I guess there's no...I guess our only source of revenue for roads is going to be the gasoline and diesel fuel tax. And cars are becoming more efficient so we're using fewer gallons so the tax goes up. And, Senator Robinson, as I drive to Lincoln from my home on the interstate, a lot of people are speeding so I guess they're helping the fund out a little bit. I've even been passed by other state senators so you're not the only one that drives fast.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wehrbein, followed by Senators Maurstad, Hall, Day, Engel and Witek.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to be brief. Some of them have covered what I wanted to say. An average driver would be five to ten dollars, as Senator Kristensen intimated. If you've got the 20 miles per gallon car or van or something, with the 15,000 miles, 750 gallons would be \$7.50. So if you...it depends on where you're at but that's about it. I was going to note that Nebraska ranks seventh presently in the amount of gas tax but we are 26th in average retail price nationwide. So our gas is a little higher for other reasons, not necessarily always because of our...we do have a slightly higher gas tax, we're seventh in the nation. But I wanted to reiterate trucks also will pay more because on diesel fuel you get about 6 miles to the gallon, I suppose, on the truck versus let's say 20 to 30 on a car. So trucks will pay more based on the amount of fuel that they use. And I also wanted to clarify a little bit about the Department of Roads has indicated with the money they put the priorities on maintenance of state roads as we have them now and then the interstate and then the