

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

October 10, 2019

Nicole Nason
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Nason,

I am writing in support of Washington State Transportation Commission's (WSTC) application to the Federal Highway Administration's Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives (STSFA) grant program. This funding will support additional research on Road Usage Charging (RUC) to prepare and inform a potential transition away from the gas tax in the future.

As you know, advancements in vehicle fuel efficiency continue to decrease gas consumption, reducing emissions, improving air quality, and benefitting the health of our communities. Projections by the Federal Energy Information Administration anticipate fuel efficiency standards near 37 miles per gallon for all vehicles by 2040. According to the Washington State Transportation Commission, in Washington state this increase in efficiency would reduce gas tax revenue by 45 percent, severely limiting the state's ability to maintain state of good repair on public roads and bridges.

Since 2012, Washington state has invested \$2.7 million in state tax dollars into its RUC Assessment and research to explore alternative revenue mechanisms to a gas tax. With previous STSFA funding in 2016 and 2017, Washington state launched a RUC pilot program which had 2,000 drivers from across the state test five RUC mileage reporting methods over a twelve month period and explored other RUC operational challenges. Continued funding through the Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives grant program will allow WSTC to continue its research and generate a detailed phase-in plan, RUC prototype "sub-test" and a final report and RUC roadmap.

With this project, WSTC and the State of Washington seek to continue to inform the national conversation seeking solutions for the long-term solvency of the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Thank you for your full and fair consideration to the Washington State Transportation Commission's application.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator