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# US Finance Commission calls for more tolls now, then direct road use charges

Posted Thu, 2009-02-26 20:49

**FINANCE COMMISSION | TOLLS VS TAXES**



A finance commission set up by the US Congress in the last five year 'TEA' bill to advise on future road funding has suggested much greater use of tolling and other pricing mechanisms. They say indirect funding through the gasoline and diesel taxes is unsustainable. It is generating grossly insufficient revenue and is causing wasteful distortions such as congestion.

More direct charges for road use, called by them vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) fees have emerged as the consensus choice for the future, the commission says. Their report headed "Paying our way: a new frameowrk for transportation fiannce" says greater use of tolling and broad based VMT fees will spur more efficient use of roadways with variable time-of-day pricing shifting inessential trips out of peakhours to make better use of expensive highway capital.

Officially named in the Washington tradition of ponderous titling "National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission" it was chaired by Robert D Atkinson, Washington DC based transportation policy writer, and comprised a mix of experts, officials and stakeholder representatives (see panel nearby). We'll refer to it as the 'financing commission' or the Atkinson Commission.

Unlike a federal transportation policy commission last year which produced a strongly divided report - lobbyists in the majority versus policy people in the minority - the Atkinson commission report is unanimous.

MORE TO COME

**<http://FinanceCommission.dot.gov>**

TOLLROADSnews 2009-02-26

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