



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DAVID A. PATERSON, Governor · Astrid C. Glynn, Commissioner

NEWS

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CONTACT: Charles Carrier
518-457-6400

NYSDOT RELEASES BEYOND THE GAS TAX FORUM PROCEEDINGS October Dialogue Examined Future of Transportation Funding

Existing revenue sources, derived largely from the gasoline tax, at the state and federal level will be insufficient to fund the doubling of investment required for transportation infrastructure, according to a new report released today by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).

The report summarizes the proceedings of a half-day conference held this October in Syracuse, at which participants discussed new sources of financing for the state's increasingly distressed transportation infrastructure that could be sought.

The conference was jointly sponsored by NYSDOT and the University Transportation Research Center. Its purpose was to educate the public, transportation industry and affected businesses and commercial interests about the growing inefficiencies with current methods of transportation financing.

In releasing the proceedings, NYSDOT Commissioner Astrid C. Glynn noted that revenues from the gasoline tax are not keeping pace with growing transportation investment needs in New York State and across the country.

The conference brought together federal and state government officials, academics, members of the construction industry and transportation experts from across the country to consider alternatives to the gasoline tax.

“Our challenge, as a nation and a state, is to identify funding sources that allow us to strengthen our economy through sound transportation investments while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving energy independence,” Commissioner Glynn said. “This will require reducing our dependence on the gasoline tax as the primary transportation funding mechanism and developing new, innovative ways of maintaining and modernizing in our infrastructure.”

Panelists at the conference noted that investments in transportation need to double in order to provide the transportation system required for mobility and competitiveness, maintaining that under-investment is not a valid option. According to forum participants, transit ridership in upstate New York increased more than nine percent in the first nine months of 2008 and Amtrak carried more passengers in July than in any other month in its history. At the same time, our highway system, especially in the northeast, is reaching then end of its useful life. Panelists warned of leaving a dismal legacy of old roads, crowded highways and inadequate transit systems if solutions are not found.

While the federal government is looked to for leadership in developing new funding mechanisms, Commissioner Glynn noted that the state would have to play a role in finding solutions as well. She reminded the listeners that New York State's Highway and Bridge Dedicated Trust Fund is reaching a critical phase, as nearly half of its available funds are used to pay debt service on previous investments instead of financing new infrastructure.

Copies of the proceeding are available on NYSDOT's Website, www.nysdot.gov/conferences/gastax/repository/Composite%20final.pdf

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