

# The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

## *A Higher Fuel Tax?*

While Pietro Nivola's call for a 25-cent per gallon increase in the federal gasoline tax to cut fuel usage is well intended, his plan would hurt wealthy SUV drivers far less than it would hurt the working poor [op-ed, April 24]. A study by the Tax Foundation found that excise taxes are five times more burdensome for lower-income households than they are for wealthy households.

Although raising taxes could reduce automobile use (but why stop with 25 cents, why not \$2.50 extra per gallon in taxes?), it is not government's job to micromanage what transportation people use. Instead, the government should remove itself from the transportation business altogether.

A system of privatized, unsubsidized roads would effectively price the costs of transportation. If roads were not seen as a free public good but as a commodity to be bought, efficiency would be maximized and the costs would be borne by those who benefit.

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