

2010 -- S 2247

LC01548

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2010

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - STUDY COMMISSION ON VEHICLE MILES TAX

Introduced By: Senators Miller, Tassoni, Goodwin, Perry, and Connors

Date Introduced: February 11, 2010

Referred To: Senate Constitutional & Regulatory Issues

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 31 of the General Laws entitled "MOTOR AND OTHER
2 VEHICLES" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 36.2

4 STUDY COMMISSION ON VEHICLE MILES TAX

5 31-36.2-1. This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Study Commission on
6 Vehicle Miles Tax".

7 31-36.2.2. Legislative findings. It is hereby found and declared as follows:

8 (1) Rhode Island's current gasoline tax, as enacted in chapter 36 of title 31, provides a
9 stream of revenue for state administered highways, mass transit construction and maintenance of
10 local roads and streets, and other purposes;

11 (2) Volatility in the wholesale and retail prices of gasoline, over which Rhode Islanders
12 have little or no control, can and does significantly affect the level of public consumption of
13 gasoline; this, in turn, significantly affects the revenues generated from the gasoline tax;

14 (3) The volatility in revenues generated from the gasoline tax can and does result in
15 multiple difficulties, including unanticipated revenue shortfalls and planning difficulties for the
16 department of transportation and the Rhode Island public transit authority;

17 (4) The people of the state could significantly benefit if a more stable and predictable
18 source of revenue were found to replace or supplement the gasoline tax;

1 (5) The vehicle miles tax is a concept that is gaining increasing attention of highway
2 agencies throughout the United States as a possible long-term alternative to the traditional model
3 of a gasoline tax.

4 (b) Commission established. There is hereby created a permanent commission to be to
5 consisting of fifteen (15) members; three (3) of whom shall be members of the senate, not more
6 than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the president of the senate; three (3)
7 of whom shall be members of the house of representatives, not more than two (2) from the same
8 political party, to be appointed by the speaker of the house; one of whom shall be the director of
9 the department of transportation, or designee; one of whom shall be the director of the division of
10 taxation, or designee; one of whom shall be the director of the division of motor vehicles, or
11 designee; one of whom shall be the general manager of the Rhode Island public transit authority,
12 or designee; and five (5) of whom shall be representatives of the general public, to be appointed
13 jointly by the speaker of the house and the president of the senate, who shall give due regard to
14 designating persons representing the business community, organized labor, the environment
15 council of Rhode Island, the coalition for transportation choices, and gasoline dealers association.
16 The speaker of the house shall select a chairperson. Vacancies in the commission shall be filled in
17 like manner as the original appointment.

18 (c) The purpose of the commission shall be to make a comprehensive examination of
19 issues relating to the desirability and feasibility of the state implementing a vehicle miles traveled
20 tax as a replacement for or a supplement to the current gasoline tax. The areas of inquiry of the
21 study commission shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) Experiments and trials of
22 a vehicle miles traveled tax carried out in other jurisdictions; (2) Studies of possible models for a
23 vehicle miles tax done by federal and state departments of transportation and the American
24 Association of State Highway Transportation Officials; (3) Projections of likely future revenue
25 streams from a possible vehicle miles traveled tax set at varying levels and under a variety of
26 conditions; (4) methods and mechanisms for implementation of a possible vehicle miles tax, with
27 due regard for protecting individual privacy; (5) fiscal implications of using a vehicle miles tax as
28 a substitute for, or as a supplement to, the current gasoline tax; and (6) the community, social, and
29 environmental benefits and detriments of using a vehicle miles tax as a substitute for or as a
30 supplement to the current gasoline tax.

31 (d) The commission shall file a written report with the president of the senate and speaker
32 of the house of representatives no later than twelve (12) months after the enactment of this
33 section. The commission shall expire six (6) months following delivery of its written report, and,
34 during that time, shall study any additional questions or matters directed to it by the president of

1 the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives. The responses of the study commission
2 to any such additional questions or matters submitted to it shall be conveyed to the president of
3 the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives.

4 (e) The commission shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 46 of title 42 (Open
5 Meetings) and chapter 2 of title 38 (Open Records).

6 (f) The commission shall dissolve upon completion of its duties as set forth in subsections
7 (c) and (d) of this section.

8 (g) All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish advice and information,
9 documentary and otherwise, to the commission and its agents as may be deemed necessary or
10 desirable to facilitate the purposes of this chapter.

11 (h) The joint committee on legislative services is authorized and directed to provide
12 suitable quarters for the commission.

13 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

=====
LC01548
=====

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - STUDY COMMISSION ON VEHICLE
MILES TAX

- 1 This act would create a study commission to examine the desirability and feasibility of a
- 2 vehicle miles traveled tax.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

=====
LC01548
=====