

Vehicle Mileage Fees: Exploratory Study

Update on Quantitative Work

John Sabala
Strategic Policy & Performance Management Office
Texas Department of Transportation



Strategy

- Develop a policy foundation for future Vehicle Mileage Fee pilot study
 1. Focus Groups
 2. Stakeholder Interviews
 3. Technology Panel
 4. State Peer Group

1. Focus Groups

- Goal 1: Gauge the public's interest, perceptions and preferences with regards to funding the state's long term transportation needs.
- Goal 2: Obtain feedback on potential vehicle mileage fee system deployment options
- 3 have been conducted
 - Large Urban – Dallas (2.4 million)
 - Small Urban – Laredo (176,000)
 - Rural - Yoakum (7,571)



Focus Groups - Yoakum, TX

- 12 Participants – Generally older, Caucasian
 - Flat opposition to vehicle mileage fees
 - Strongest concerns: privacy, cost/bureaucracy
 - Fear of rural drivers being punished
 - Refuse to accept idea of future funding crisis

“This will be a nightmare.”

“Ridiculous....”

“Government doesn’t belong in my car!”

Focus Group - Laredo, TX

- 10 Participants – Younger, Hispanic
 - Saw potential value in vehicle mileage fees
 - **Strongest concern: enforcement, privacy**
 - Believe in a future funding crisis and threat from future non-payers (electric vehicles)

“(You) seem to be reinventing the wheel.”
“Except for the Big Brother thing, this is the best option.”

Focus Group - Dallas, TX

- 9 Participants - Most racially diverse group
 - See potential value in vehicle mileage fees, but doubt it can be workable
 - Strongest concerns: enforcement, system cost
 - Solutions: simplicity & adding more options
 - Suggestion from Dallas: aim vehicle mileage fees toward electric vehicles

“The idea is good.”

“Kind of neat...”

“Texans do not like their privacy invaded... it’s a cultural thing.”

Focus Group Conclusions

***“But...people
will drive less!”***

- General opposition to mileage fees
 - Strongest concerns: privacy, cost, “new bureaucracy,”
 - Skeptical of enforcement & system reliability
- Target electric vehicles first
- Tackle fairness issues
 - Punishment” of rural drivers
 - Potential burden on low income drivers

2. Trans. Stakeholder Interviews

- Randomly selected 15 interviewees out of 80
 - Chambers, MPOs, transportation and county associations, road user/trucking groups, construction industry
- 10 legislative representatives
 - 5 state reps
 - 5 state senators

Stakeholder Interview Topics

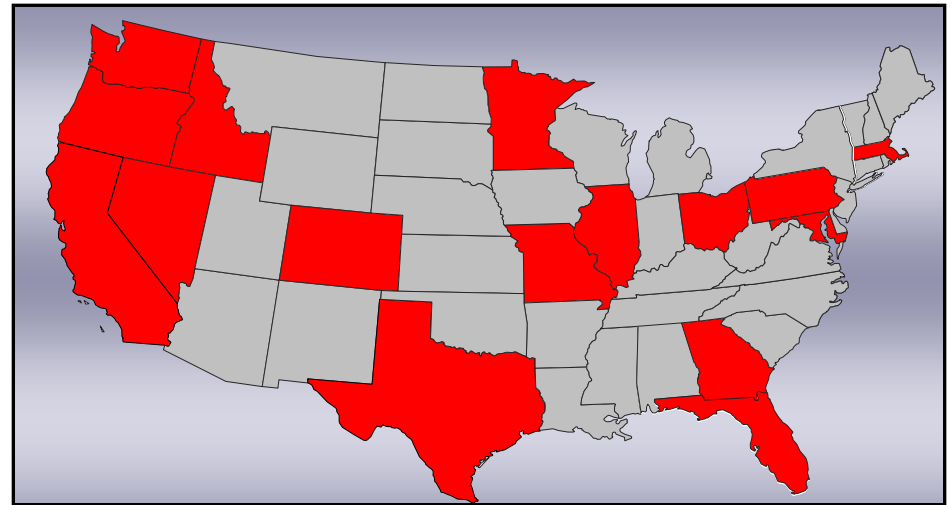
- What's your vision of the future of trans. funding and financing?
- How do you perceive the current state of trans. funding and financing?
- What are your perceptions of mileage fees?
 - VMF as a concept, hurdles to implementation
 - Best practices – implementation and outreach strategies

3. Technology Panel

- Provide input on the tech. possibilities for vehicle mileage fees
 - Give feedback provided by focus groups, stakeholders and legislator interviews
- Industries represented on panel:
 - In vehicle technologies
 - GPS-based solutions
 - Data management services
 - Tolling systems
 - Mapping services
 - Distance-based/Pay-as-you-drive (PAYD) insurance

4. State DOT Peer Group

- Monthly phone calls
 - March 2010
 - April 2010
 - Next call – June 17th
- Members
 - State DOTs
 - I-95 Coalition
 - State Governor's Offices
 - West Coast Corridor Coalition
 - State Legislatures
 - State Transportation Commissions



Next steps...



- Potential for more rural/small urban focus groups
- Stakeholders interviews ongoing
- Tech. panel first meeting in May
- State peer group discussions ongoing

Research will be completed by the end of Summer 2010.

Final report expected in the Fall of 2010

For more information...

<http://utcm.tamu.edu/mbuf>

- Past mileage-based User Fee Symposium documents
- Primer
- TTI/TxDOT research
- Links to news, pilot studies and other resources
- Listserv

John Sabala jsabala@dot.state.tx.us
(512) 936-9515

