



Youngkin wants lawmakers to suspend gas tax for 3 months

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin estimated the move would save drivers 26 cents per gallon of gas.

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RICHMOND, Va. — Republican Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin wants the divided General Assembly to pass legislation that would suspend the state gas tax for three months.

The governor pitched the idea during an appearance Wednesday at a Richmond-area gas station.

The governor said high gas prices are just part of the “inflationary pressures” Virginia families are facing.

Youngkin is proposing to suspend the state motor vehicle fuels tax, priced at just north of 26.2 cents per gallon of gasoline and 27 cents per gallon of diesel.

It is not clear when lawmakers will take a vote. If the proposal gets the green light, drivers will ditch paying the state fuels tax in May, June and July. It would get phased back in slowly in August and September.

But would the everyday driver, who already pays a state and federal gas tax, notice a difference?

"Gas taxes are only about one-eighth of the overall cost of gasoline these days. So, these gas tax suspensions won't make a lot of difference to motorists," said Chris Edwards with the Cato Institute, a gas tax expert who spoke with [the VERIFY team](#).

To reflect lower costs of other everyday goods, Old Dominion University professor and economist Dr. Vinod Agarwal said things would need to go a step further.

"It would be better if we were to have a tax holiday on the federal level, rather than the state level," Agarwal said.

Tourism-wise, Agarwal doubted a state gas tax holiday would bring more visitors to Hampton Roads.

"If the gas tax is not there, you're still going to get people from closer markets rather than far out markets," Agarwal said.

This summer, drivable destinations like Virginia Beach are counting on eased COVID-19 restrictions and return of events to give them a boost.

Oceanfront businesses like Atlantic Pints have noticed things are already on the up-and-up.

"It's a lot more people down here than normal for this time of year. So, we've actually been having a little bit more fun this year," said Atlantic Pints General Manager and Executive Chef Tony Candelore.

Passage of a Virginia gas tax break would require bipartisan cooperation. Leadership of the Senate Democratic caucus neither fully endorsed nor rejected the proposal.

However, Majority Leader Dick Saslaw (D-35 District) issued the following statement:

"While we can understand Governor Youngkin's desire to address high prices at the gas pump, fuel costs have actually been falling – 40 cents per gallon in the last four days. The Commonwealth's transportation budget relies on gas tax revenue; in my district, the region can't currently maintain our current infrastructure much less any new construction. Some roads even look like a war has been fought on them.

"As final negotiations take place, we need to make sure we can provide relief for Virginians while still maintaining a robust and responsible budget. Senate Democrats look forward to working with Governor Youngkin, Senate Republicans, and the House of Delegates to achieve these and many other goals. Let's get to work."