

Dispatch·Argus

Letter: Before hiking gas tax, end fund sweeps

Dennis English

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Intuitively I have known the taxes Illinois collects from fuel and license taxes was being diverted to purposes other than roads and bridges. When asked, Christine Radogno, who was Illinois Senate minority leader at the time, confirmed three years ago that money in the highway fund was being swept for non-highway uses.

Yesterday I received a report from the Taxpayer Education Foundation summarizing a report created by Randal O'Toole, a Cato Institute senior fellow, who did an in depth analysis of Illinois infrastructure. He found that Chicago transit was exceedingly wasteful, but also heavily subsidized by gasoline taxes.

I quote from the press release: "In 2016, the state of Illinois collected about \$1.3B in gas taxes, nearly \$400M or about 30% of which went to subsidize transit. It also collected \$1.4B in vehicle registration fees, of which another 30% or \$400M went to transit. Add that to the fact that about 20% of the \$1.0B in federal gas taxes paid by Illinois drivers goes for transit and Illinois auto owners subsidize transit to the tune of about \$1B a year."

Some Illinois leaders believe we need higher motor fuel taxes and vehicle fees. They say it's because of electric cars and very efficient gas powered vehicles. I believe that's an outright lie, because they've known for years where the money is going.

Until the practice of sweeping money from motor taxes and fees stops I will be against higher fuel taxes, and I urge you to be also.

Dennis English,

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