



Get ready. New Jersey gas tax increase kicks in Tuesday

MARTIN DeANGELIS | Staff Writer
October 27, 2016

The countdown is on to the biggest gasoline-tax increase in New Jersey history, the 23-cent charge that will be tacked on to every gallon of gas sold in the state starting Tuesday morning.

And gas-station operators are getting ready for that change, which the state Legislature passed and Gov. Chris Christie signed into law earlier this month. The move followed several years of political battles in Trenton over plans to renew funding for the Transportation Trust Fund, which had run out of the money used to pay for road and bridge repair or construction projects around the state.

Sal Risalvato is executive director of the New Jersey Gasoline C-Store Automotive Association, whose roughly 1,000 members run gas stations, convenience stores and repair shops. He said Thursday that station owners expect some customers to fill up by Monday to beat the new tax, but he doesn't know if that will be widespread enough to lead to people lining up to fill up.

"There will be those people who say let me save 23 cents a gallon and buy before Tuesday. ... If I'm a guy who only fills up every two weeks, I'm going to make it my business to get in there in the next couple of days," Risalvato said. Still, he added that "the way a lot of people purchase gasoline is not going to allow them to do that."

But he has also warned gas retailers that if there is a run on their pumps this weekend, they may need to be patient with the people who deliver the gasoline the stations sell to drivers.

"If you think you're going to be ordering extra gallons, the suppliers only have so much capacity," he said.

For station owners, the bottom-line financial effect of the tax increase is that an 8,500-gallon tank of gasoline will cost them an extra \$1,955 to buy. They will also need to send the state 23 cents for every gallon of gas they have left in their underground storage tanks when Monday night rolls into Tuesday morning, Risalvato said.

"So you tell me if they like it," he said, adding that "our members get 100 percent of the blame every time the price of gas goes up a penny. I've been telling them that if people come in and they're irate, just let them vent," he said.

"Nobody comes in bringing flowers and doughnuts and cupcakes when price goes down," Risalvato said. But people at the gas stations get complaints when the price goes up – "as if it's their fault."

Contact: 609-272-7237
MDeangelis@pressofac.com
Twitter @PressBeach