



Brace Yourselves, N.J. Drivers, The Gas Tax May Go Up Again

By: Meg Baker, April 3, 2019

NEPTUNE, N.J. (CBSNewYork) — New Jersey drivers may soon be paying more at the pump.

CBS2's Meg Baker found out why on Wednesday.

It's unfortunate news for drivers. The gas tax could again increase next fall. The New Jersey Gasoline Store and C-Store Automotive Association said that will put the cost of gas in the Garden State right in line with New York's high prices.

New Jersey motorists once paid one of the lowest gas taxes in the country, but have already seen the tax jump 23 cents per gallon under a deal made by former Gov. Chris Christie and the Democratic Legislature to fund the Transportation Trust Fund. The tax went up 4.3 cents last fall in order to meet revenue projections and now it may go up again.

The original deal states the gas tax must go up or down to insure \$2 billion per year is generated to fund road and rail projects. That determination is made by the state treasurer, who is appointed by the governor.

But the NJGCA said as gas prices rise, the state loses buyers, which means less tax revenue.

"We lost so much volume to New York that it required the tax to go up 4 cents last year," the NJGCA's Sal Risalvato said. "Now, the tax difference between New York and New Jersey is even smaller, and we're losing more volume to New York. As long as we lose volume to New York, our tax dollars are being paid in New York. New York is getting a windfall. New Jersey is losing the revenue."

As expected, drivers are less than thrilled.

"It all adds up. It's a bummer," said Annie Monihan of Montclair.

“Yeah, it’s frustrating to hear,” added a Toms River resident.

“Yes, I feel like I’m overtaxed in Jersey,” Neptune resident Tonya Johnson said.

Risalvato said one solution may be to allow drivers to pump their own gas. Self serve is cheaper than full service and could lower the price by more than 10 cents per gallon.

The state treasurer is still holding out a bit of hope a hike won’t be needed. The **decision** must be made right around Election Day next fall.