

NEW JERSEY 101.5

I'm Pro-Choice (On Self-Serve Gas)

By: Jeff Deminski, December 11, 2020

I took this picture from my parked car the other day. I want you to take a good hard look. Look at the orange traffic cones at this one island of gas pumps.



Jeff Deminski photo

There are several other islands. The others were all open. This one was closed.

Now when you see this sort of thing you might think it's because those pumps have a separate underground tank which ran dry. That's not the case. **As explained on our show by Sal Risalvato, executive director of the NJGCA (they represent independent gas station owners), the dreaded orange cones are almost always out for one reason only. They didn't have enough manpower to tend to all the islands on a given shift.**

It's the same as at a restaurant when you're still on the wait list and you complain that you see empty tables only to have it explained to you that servers called out and they're short a person or two.

Why am I bringing this up? Well, because I'm pro-choice. I believe in self-serve gas. But it doesn't have to be all or nothing. I believe (and so does Sal Risalvato, by the way) that you can have both full-serve and self-serve at the same gas station.

It happens so often that one island is blocked off with cones. Make that a dedicated self-serve pump. All the good people who complain about self-serve making their hands smell like gasoline

all day or forcing them out of their cars in cold weather can keep right on going to those other manned islands. Allow us more industrious types to roll up our sleeves and pump our own gas at the island that's often closed off anyway. It's a win-win.

We are the only state in the entire country that has a statewide ban on self-serve gas. It's time we gave it a chance. The last time we did in the 1940s, it was wildly popular. Which is why other gas retailers who didn't like the competition leaned on legislators to get it banned under the guise of public safety. In reality it was all about price fixing and collusion.

And that is no luxury my friend.