



NJ Drivers May Soon Do Something They Haven't Done in 70 Years: Pump Their Own Gas

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By: Julio "Gaby" Acevedo, March 1, 2022

After more than 70 years, it may finally be time for New Jersey drivers to pump their own gas.

The battle over who fills gas tanks in the Garden State is on once again. New Jersey is the only state in the nation where self-serve gas stations are not allowed, and has been that way since 1949.

But full service stations may soon become things of the past if a proposed bill passes. It is a legislative fight the state has seen in years past, although there is a big difference this time around: Gas retailers appear to be on board with the change.

For many in New Jersey, the biggest question remains: Will passing such a measure eventually help bring down the price of gas?

"I have members who tell me they can lower the price 23 cents," said Sal Risalvato of the New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience Store and Gas Automotive Association.

Several lawmakers believe it is now time to give drivers the option, just like every other state in the country, to pump their own gas — and believe it will help stations at the same time.

"They are hurting. Gas stations are trying to balance their business, we need to make sure we are for them," said Democratic Assemblywoman Annette Chapparro. "It's going to save money, people will see that. At least 15 cents less at the gas pump."

Risalvato agrees.

"Because New Jersey law requires that somebody pump, they have to close if they don't have a gasoline attendant," he said.

If passed, the legislation would give owners the option to provide self service, full service or a combination of the two. It would allow stations to offer a discount to drivers who pump their own gas, while also allowing those with disabilities to have their gas pumped by an attendant at a lower self-service price, if it is offered.

Some drivers said that they like the law the way it is, saying that it's easier for everyone and provides a job. Others said that it help the gas stations still dealing with staffing shortages.

Retailers argue that those who use diesel fuel already can pump on their own, and electric vehicle owners charge on their own without breaking any laws — so there's already some precedent. Just a few of the reasons they say the self-serve option is long overdue.