



Option Fueling Model Myths vs. Facts

Myth

This change in the law will force me to pump my own gas.

Fact

The proposed bill will require all larger gas stations (more than 4 dispensers) to continue to offer full-service no matter what, guaranteeing that it will continue to be readily available. Many smaller stations will choose to offer full-serve as well based on customer demand and employee availability. New Jersey will still have the strongest full-serve mandate in the nation.

Myth

Station owners will charge for self-service what they do now and just raise the price for full-service.

Fact

Basic economics shows this will not be the case. There is no more competitive product than gasoline, it is the only business left where even a penny difference in price can make a huge difference. Every station is selling basically the same product, and they all have a huge sign in front of their business advertising their price. When people don't like the price, they keep on driving; many consumers will go out of their way just to save a few pennies per gallon. Any retailer who tries to pocket all the savings will see their customers disappear to the competitor who passes the savings on, and they will be worse off than if they lowered their price. Selling gas is eternally a race to the bottom and when all expenses are considered, many retailers lose money selling gas—they do it to attract customers to their convenience store or auto repair shop. You are already paying a premium price for full-serve gas, whether you want to or not.

Myth

The current system isn't broken, we shouldn't change it.

Fact

For station owners and many motorists, it is broken. For years it has been extremely difficult to find people who want to work as gas attendants. Stations pay well above the minimum wage and still can't hire or keep employees. The recent labor shortage has turned it into a crisis, and most locations are reducing their hours. Under current New Jersey law, it is illegal to sell gasoline unless there is an attendant to pump it. There is also a significant number of motorists who would rather pump their own gas and already attempt to do so. This forces the attendant to either get in confrontation with a stranger or put the station at risk of a fine. There would be no harm in simply making it legal for people to pump their own gas if they choose to.

Myth

The only way New Jersey drivers should receive fuel is from an attendant.

Fact

New Jersey is the only state in the country where the government prohibits all drivers from pumping their own gas. People who want to pump their own gas should have the freedom to do so and residents of other states are satisfied that they have been given the choice to pump their own gas. It is also perfectly legal to pump your own diesel fuel. And imagine how ridiculous it would be if someone proposed a law requiring an attendant to come to your house and plug in your electric vehicle for you. Only gasoline is required by law to be pumped by an attendant.

Myth

No one will help me learn how to pump my own gas and I will be stranded at the pump.

Fact

As anyone who has fueled up out of state knows, it's designed to be extremely simple, which is why the rest of the country does it with no issue. People who wish to have an attendant pump their gas will have that option.

Myth

We don't want to risk the jobs of gas attendants who would be out of work without full-service stations.

Fact

There are many job functions at a service station and gas station/convenience store. Station owners can't find workers for their attached businesses either and can easily reassign existing attendants there. Their biggest problem is not being able to find and keep attendants, even at wages well over the minimum. Almost every time you see orange cones blocking off a pump, it's because there aren't enough attendants to operate that pump. Allowing self-serve would just allow consumers to use those pumps if they want to.

Myth

In the time of COVID-19, full-service gas is the safest option for residents.

Fact

We know that the best way to avoid any virus is to avoid face-to-face contact with other people. Self-service options allow for no personal contact with other people and residents can take further precautions to make pumping their own gas the safest option right now. Many modern pumps even allow customers to pay for their purchase through apps on their phone.

Myth

There is no benefit to residents who will now have to perform a task that was always done for them.

Fact

For many consumers it is easier and more convenient not to waste their time waiting to interact with another person instead of just quickly pumping it themselves. People who want to pump their own gas will be able to save money with discounted self-service prices. Retailers expect that by implementing a self-serve option, drivers would save 15¢ or more per gallon.

Myth

Changing the law will take full-serve away from motorists with a disability.

Fact

New Jersey will still have the strongest full-serve mandate in the country, with the law guaranteeing that many stations will still offer full-serve. Anyone with a persons with a disability placard will be able to have their gas pumped for them at the lower self-serve price. Remember, 48 states have had almost exclusively self-service gas for decades without any issue, and with no one advocating they adopt the NJ model.

Myth

It will be so inconvenient for me to have to get out of my car and pump my own gas. It is easier to wait for the attendant to come ask me what I would like.

Fact

By having the option to pump your own gas, you will control the amount of time between pulling up to a pump and when you leave the pump. You no longer will need to wait for an attendant who is busy with other customers or someone who does not see you sitting at the pump waiting for them to come to you. With how busy our lives are, time and convenience are extremely important to most people. And if you'd rather wait, that option will be readily available.

For more information about the self-serve fueling option and the Fuel Your Way NJ coalition please visit www.fuelyourwaynj.com