

Gothamist

New Jersey Is Now The Only State Where You Can't Pump Your Own Gas

By Elizabeth Shwe, August 5th, 2023

New Jersey is now the only U.S. state that does not allow motorists to pump their own gas.

This comes after Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek signed a bill on Friday allowing motorists to choose to pump their own gas or have a gasoline attendant do it. However, the new law does not allow more self-service pumps than serviced gas pumps, and requires at least one gas attendant to provide service.

The Garden State's ban on self-service gasoline stations dates back to 1949, when dispensing gas was thought to pose a safety hazard. Other states began lifting their self-service bans in the 1980s.

In March 2022, the New Jersey Legislature introduced the "Motorist Fueling Choice and Convenience Act," which would allow motorists to pump their own fuel.

The bill would allow gas stations to offer lower prices to customers who pump their own gas. It would also require gas stations with more than four pumps to have a service attendant between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Self-service gas stations would offer longer evening hours and potentially large savings to customers by helping to bring down gas prices, according to the bill's sponsors.

However, the bill has not come up for a hearing or a vote. When asked about it last year, Gov. Phil Murphy said self-service gas is a "political third rail in New Jersey." He went on to add that even if the bill were to pass, he would be reluctant to sign it because of how high gas prices were at the time.

Eric Blomgren, the chief administrator and director of government affairs of the New Jersey Gasoline-Convenience-Automotive Association, said he wants to see

a change in the law that would give New Jersey drivers the option to pump their own gas.

“Many people find it more convenient to pump their own rather than to wait for a busy attendant, and the law shouldn’t take that choice away,” Blomgren said.

Gas station owners are having trouble finding people who want to work as gas attendants, which leads to closed pump stations and reduced operating hours, he continued.

“More and more motorists are just illegally pumping the gas themselves. There's no reason for New Jersey to be the only place left in the entire country to ban self-serve from those who want it,” Blomgren said.