



State of Indiana

Senate

Senator Michael Griffin
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Committees:
Insurance and Financial Institutions
Local Government
Homeland Security and Transportation
Veterans Affairs and The Military

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

The Honorable Eric Holcomb, Governor
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb:

As State Senator for District 1, it is my foremost duty to address issues on the hearts and minds of the Hoosiers I serve. I take great care to closely monitor the correspondence that comes into my office and work to address these challenges through good public policy. Recently, I have received many urgent messages from residents pained by record-high (and still-rising) gasoline prices. Though state officials have little control over the variables increasing baseline prices, we *do* control a key component of overall cost: the gas tax. To that end, and in the service of the people, I am respectfully urging you to take action by either directly suspending the gas tax or calling the Legislature into session to address the matter.

I write following your announcement of your Inflation Relief Plan, which entails returning an additional \$225 to each additional filer. I greatly respect the sentiment behind the call—I do firmly believe that the surplus built by our taxpayers should be reinvested in them. Unfortunately, I fear that this assistance will prove insufficient. At Lake County's highest price, this additional money would only buy about 2.5 tanks of gas for an average Hoosier's car. The refund also excludes cities, counties, small businesses and nonprofits from relief, all of whom would benefit from a temporary halt on the gas tax. As costs continue to rise, we must meet the occasion with *sustained, significant* relief for all who are struggling: halting the gas tax will ease everyday pain for many.

Prior to my selection as senator, I served for over thirty years as a local public finance officer. As such, please know this call is not frivolous and that the underlying fiscal rationale is sound. A reliable estimate is that a four month suspension of regular and gas use taxes would cost between \$592 and \$597 million. In the month of April, the revenue in excess of the budget requirements was \$500 million. Through the first ten months of the budget cycle, the revenue in excess of budget requirements is \$865 million! We have the ability and the opportunity to save Hoosiers real money while holding local communities and their infrastructure harmless, retaining nearly \$300 million of revenue surplus *and* without touching Indiana's ongoing budgetary requirements.

With regular unleaded gas prices now ranging between \$5.29 and \$5.89 per gallon in Lake County, Hoosiers are having to make unduly difficult decisions with their money. The vast majority of Indiana residents rely on their vehicles for transportation to work, school and home to their families. We can and must act swiftly to help our fellow Hoosiers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It is my honor to serve Indiana Senate District 1, and I look forward to partnering with your office on issues like this to improve the quality of life in our state.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Griffin
Indiana State Senator
Senate District 1