



Grover G. Norquist

President

September 4, 2007

The Honorable James Oberstar  
2365 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Oberstar:

**On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform, I urge you to rethink your promotion of plans that would temporarily increase the federal excise tax on gasoline by 5 cents per gallon to fund bridge repair around the country.**

While I do agree that bridge safety should be a high priority, I reject your claim that the government lacks funding for bridge maintenance. The 2005 Highway Bill, in which you played a leading role, increased related funding by 42 percent to \$286.5 billion? Of that increase, \$24.5 billion went to earmarks, much of it earmarked *away from* urban road and bridge projects and towards bike paths and nature trails. You were able to secure \$250 million for projects you deemed vitally important to Minnesota transportation? May I ask how much of that money went towards bridge and road repairs?

As of late, you also boasted about the \$12 million in funding you were able to secure in the Transportation - Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill (HR 3074) for projects including commuter rail and bike/walk paths. None of it went to repair bridges.

Gas tax increases are especially damaging. **A 5 cent-per-gallon jump would cost American motorists an estimated \$25 billion over the next three years.** This would hardly go unnoticed by the taxpayer as many have claimed. Hiking gas taxes drives up the cost of living, because every product and every service you buy has to be transported. **With a heavier tax burden, it will be harder for American families to buy food, drive to soccer practice, heat their homes or take a vacation.**

**Instead of punishing innocent taxpayers for your blunders, Members of the House should take this as a lesson in inefficient governance.** The exorbitant taxes people are forced to pay always tend to fund projects that are best for the politicians rather than the people, and in hindsight, your pork barrel spending in the 2005 Highway Bill just added more evidence to confirm that rule.

**Rather than looking to a "quick fix" for transportation spending through raising the gas tax, I encourage you to prioritize spending and implement real reform to meet transportation goals.**

Onward,

Grover G. Norquist

Cc: All Members of Congress