Vehicle Mileage Fees: Exploratory Study

Update on Quantitative Work

John Sabala
Strategic Policy & Performance Management Office
Texas Department of Transportation
Strategy

- Develop a policy foundation for future Vehicle Mileage Fee pilot study
  1. Focus Groups
  2. Stakeholder Interviews
  3. Technology Panel
  4. State Peer Group
1. Focus Groups

- Goal 1: Gauge the public’s interest, perceptions and preferences with regards to funding the state’s long term transportation needs.

- Goal 2: Obtain feedback on potential vehicle mileage fee system deployment options

- 3 have been conducted
  - Large Urban – Dallas (2.4 million)
  - Small Urban – Laredo (176,000)
  - Rural - Yoakum (7,571)
Focus Groups - Yoakum, TX

- 12 Participants – Generally older, Caucasian
  - Flat opposition to vehicle mileage fees
    - Strongest concerns: privacy, cost/bureaucracy
    - Fear of rural drivers being punished
  - Refuse to accept idea of future funding crisis

“This will be a nightmare.”
“Ridiculous....”
“Government doesn’t belong in my car!”
Focus Group - Laredo, TX

- 10 Participants – Younger, Hispanic
  - Saw potential value in vehicle mileage fees
    - Strongest concern: enforcement, privacy
  - Believe in a future funding crisis and threat from future non-payers (electric vehicles)

“(You) seem to be reinventing the wheel.”
“Except for the Big Brother thing, this is the best option.”
Focus Group - Dallas, TX

- 9 Participants - Most racially diverse group
  - See potential value in vehicle mileage fees, but doubt it can be workable
    - Strongest concerns: enforcement, system cost
    - Solutions: simplicity & adding more options
  - Suggestion from Dallas: aim vehicle mileage fees toward electric vehicles

“The idea is good.”
“Kind of neat...”
“Texans do not like their privacy invaded... it’s a cultural thing.”
Focus Group Conclusions

- General opposition to mileage fees
  - Strongest concerns: privacy, cost, “new bureaucracy,”
  - Skeptical of enforcement & system reliability
- Target electric vehicles first
- Tackle fairness issues
  - Punishment” of rural drivers
  - Potential burden on low income drivers

“But...people will drive less!”
2. Trans. Stakeholder Interviews

- Randomly selected 15 interviewees out of 80
  - Chambers, MPOs, transportation and county associations, road user/trucking groups, construction industry
- 10 legislative representatives
  - 5 state reps
  - 5 state senators
Stakeholder Interview Topics

- What’s your vision of the future of trans. funding and financing?
- How do you perceive the current state of trans. funding and financing?
- What are your perceptions of mileage fees?
  - VMF as a concept, hurdles to implementation
  - Best practices – implementation and outreach strategies
3. Technology Panel

- Provide input on the tech. possibilities for vehicle mileage fees
  - Give feedback provided by focus groups, stakeholders and legislator interviews

- Industries represented on panel:
  - In vehicle technologies
  - GPS-based solutions
  - Data management services
  - Tolling systems
  - Mapping services
  - Distance-based/Pay-as-you-drive (PAYD) insurance
4. State DOT Peer Group

- Monthly phone calls
  - March 2010
  - April 2010
  - Next call – June 17th

- Members
  - State DOTs
  - I-95 Coalition
  - State Governor’s Offices
  - West Coast Corridor Coalition
  - State Legislatures
  - State Transportation Commissions
Next steps...

- Potential for more rural/small urban focus groups
- Stakeholders interviews ongoing
- Tech. panel first meeting in May
- State peer group discussions ongoing

Research will be completed by the end of Summer 2010.

Final report expected in the Fall of 2010
For more information...

http://utcm.tamu.edu/mbuf

- Past mileage-based User Fee Symposium documents
- Primer
- TTI/TxDOT research
- Links to news, pilot studies and other resources
- Listserv

John Sabala jsabala@dot.state.tx.us
(512) 936-9515