

RUC WEST: NEW PATHS TO ROAD FUNDING
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT: MESSAGING PLATFORM

<p>Voice: Approachable, respectable, reputable, transparent, innovative, inclusive, purposeful</p>	<p>Key Messages:</p> <p>As responsible transportation agencies, the <i>Western Road Usage Charge Consortium (RUC West)</i> brings together leaders from 14 state transportation organizations to explore a Road Usage Charge (RUC) as a transportation funding alternative to the gas tax. RUC West provides opportunities to learn more, watch developments, or consider RUC as an alternative transportation funding option.</p> <p>Gas tax revenues have declined significantly as a result of less driving, increased fuel efficiency and decreased purchasing power for construction-related materials.</p> <p>RUC could provide states a transportation funding alternative (among many) that would charge drivers for the number of miles driven, rather than the amount of fuel vehicles consume.</p>
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<p>Key Audience(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Stakeholders: Member DOTs, Steering Committee, Executive Committee and Directors, other government officials • External Stakeholders: Other relevant state agencies, non-member DOTs, city and county governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Chambers of Commerce, legislators, academics, transportation organizations, State Highway Patrols, related industries (trucking, security, etc.), media

RUC WEST COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

<p>About RUC West: Provide Access to the Latest Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUC West brings together leaders from state transportation organizations to share best practices and research Road Usage Charges. • This group acts as a go-to source for anyone who has any interest in Road Usage Charges. Whether watching the story unfold, or considering implementation of a Road Usage Charge, RUC West is the place to find a clear, 	<p>About RUC West: Conduct Research and Share Widely in the Region and Country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUC West recognizes RUC implementation is still new, and there is still much to be learned. Some information simply isn't known, and there are also barriers to implementation. RUC West strives to learn more about the gaps and barriers, so states can make informed decisions about whether RUC could be a strong road funding solution. 	<p>About RUC: Promote public understanding of RUC as an alternative funding source</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas tax revenues have dwindled, while the cost to maintain our roads has increased significantly. Without alternative funding sources, the public will experience more congestion and hazardous driving conditions. • The gas tax may not be able to meet current and long-term transportation funding needs and will continue to
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<p>factual, non-biased picture of how RUC has worked and is working in other states.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUC West also provides case studies, best practices, and the most up-to-date information on Road Usage Charge available anywhere. • RUC West directs and gathers research and media audits on RUC. • RUC West also compiles best practices and lessons learned, identify barriers and misconceptions, provide tactics to streamline implementation, and lessen inefficiencies. • RUC West can help state DOTs evaluate RUC as a potential replacement or complement to existing funding sources, creating a suite of funding options. • RUC West offers members states an opportunity to pool resources to conduct research they might not be able to afford on their own, again maximizing limited state resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUC West’s collaborative offers states a unique opportunity to pool resources to pay for ongoing research related to RUC implementation and potential barriers. • RUC West has identified the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examine current programs (Oregon) ○ Address out-of-state drivers in a RUC system ○ Learn about effects of RUC on rural residents ○ Understand public knowledge of RUC ○ Define impacts of a changing vehicle fleet economy on state transportation funding ○ Create road map for states consideration RUC implementation ○ Learn about ongoing public concerns about privacy ○ Identify evasion and potential policies ○ Create RUC Vendor Certification Program ○ Determine parameters for the basis of a road usage charge • The RUC West website will publish its unbiased findings along with others throughout the country and around the world. • RUC West’s research intends to learn more about the complexities of implementation – it is not meant to provide any bias for or against RUC. 	<p>generate less revenue as cars become more fuel-efficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars and consumer preferences have changed considerably since the gas tax was first instituted in 1919. • More fuel-efficient vehicles, including hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles, have decreased revenue from gas tax, while road maintenance costs continue to rise. • RUC allows drivers to pay based on the number of miles they drive – and wear and tear on the roadways – rather than the amount of fuel they buy. • RUC provides users with data through a variety of customizable reporting options. • Drivers have the opportunity to increase awareness of how many miles they drive and how much they pay for transportation. • Some states are testing mileage reporting options with features such as vehicle diagnostic checks, trip planning, and on-board telematics that provide drivers with even more data. • The general public often misunderstands the impact of vehicles on the road – research found traditional vehicles and passenger trucks have no significant difference in wear and tear on roads.
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SUPPORTING INFORMATION / DATA POINTS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 states across three tiers of implementation have already become part of RUC West. • RUC West has already identified 16 projects. Of these, all but two are fully funded. • RUC West has a new website to showcase information about the organization. The website will also provide key stakeholders all of the tools they need to learn about RUC. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUC West has fully funded and completed the following research projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Critical examination of the Oregon RUC program ○ Addressing out-of-state drivers in a RUC system (Phase I) ○ Impacts of a changing vehicle fleet fuel economy on state transportation funding • RUC West has fully funded the following research projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addressing out-of-state drivers in a RUC system (Phase II) ○ Web-based cost transportation calendar ○ Effects of RUC on rural residents ○ Public understanding of a RUC system ○ Road map for state consideration of a RUC system ○ Protection of privacy in a RUC system ○ Evasion and potential enforcement policy options ○ RUC vendor certification (Phases I and II) ○ Plan for Regional RUC pilot ○ Parameters for a RUC rate • RUC West has partially funded the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public understanding of a RUC system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oregon is a member of RUC West and the first state to officially adopt a RUC program in the United States. California and Colorado are also testing RUC through their own statewide pilot programs. • The federal gas tax has remained unchanged since 1993. • Poor road conditions cost the average driver \$516/year in vehicle operations costs. • By 2030, as much as half the revenue that could be collected from gas tax will be lost to fuel efficiency. • A 2007 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) report found that vehicles weighing between 2,000 and 7,000 lbs. produce about the same wear and tear on our roads. For example, a Toyota Prius contributes the same level of impact to our roadways as a Ford F-150 pickup truck. • The National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission studied a range of funding options including fuel taxes, vehicle fees, leasing, direct spending, tax credits, dedicated sales taxes, direct user fees and indirect user fees, and evaluated the transportation policy and revenue generating potential of each option. They concluded that RUC is a |
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local jurisdictions that have enacted a local gas tax and their distribution of county / city portion of taxes / indexing • RUC West seeks funding for the following projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RUC payment options at the gas pump (point of retail sales) 	<p>sustainable option for the future of our roadways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RUC pilot programs in RUC West member states such as Oregon and California have tested both GPS-enabled and manual mileage recording options with positive results. • The current California Road Charge Pilot is testing mileage and time options that allow users to pre-pay for the miles they drive. • Some states have partnered with the private sector to strengthen privacy measures and create an intermediary between driver's personal information and government.
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RUC WEST MEMBER STATES TIERS

RUC West member states are organized into three tiers based on their current level of involvement in advancing RUC in their state:

Tier 1: States Following / Researching RUC

- Arizona
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Texas
- Washington

Tier 2: States Testing RUC Pilot Programs

- California
- Colorado
- Utah

Tier 3: States with Policy Enacted to Implement RUC Programs

- Oregon

SAMPLE MESSAGES FOR TIERS

Tier 1: Monitoring transportation trends

We are a responsible transportation authority and continuously monitor transportation trends and developments nationwide.

Tier 2: Exploring alternative funding options

We are a responsible transportation authority. We are interested to learn if road usage charging could be important and relevant for our state, and if such a system would work here.

Tier 3: RUC provides equitable road-funding solution

After exploring many choices, we believe RUC provides the most equitable solution to road funding. We believe users should pay their fair share of road use and maintenance, and RUC gives us the flexibility to do just that.

NOTE: Tier 3 states should be ready to speak to their local context. Here is an example for Oregon:

Tier 1:

- We are interested to learn if road usage charging could be relevant and how it could impact our state. We are watching other states implementing road usage charging to see if such applications might work here.
- We are not considering incorporation of road usage charging into our transportation policy, but we need to stay aware of how the concept and technology is developing across the country. Even if we never implement road usage charging, our state transportation systems are connected and another state's road usage charge program may affect our transportation system.
- As states begin looking for new or alternative transportation funding options, this is just one of many options to explore.
- Refer to the RUC West website for additional information about road usage charging.

Tier 2:

- All states are looking for new transportation funding options. This is just one option we are considering.
- In order to really know if road charging is viable for our state we have to test it. This is the next step in the extensive process of evaluating the concept, how it works and uncovering implementation issues.
- We are also engaging stakeholders and members of the public in this process because we also want to know how we can address public concerns about the road charge system.
- We need to understand system elements in more detail in order to have a discussion with the public about any direction we might take.
- Should we decide to pursue road charging further, we will need to be able to describe how it would operate in our state. In conducting a pilot, we will gain real world experience to help us learn and decide if road charging is right for us.

Tier 3:

- The Road Usage Charge (RUC) Program, was created by Senate Bill 810, and authorizes the Oregon Department of Transportation to assess a per-mile charge for volunteer drivers. The OReGO program started July 1, 2015.
 - The road usage charge is set at 1.5 cents per mile.
 - The number of vehicles in the program is limited to 5,000 cars and light-duty commercial vehicles.
 - Credits are applied for the state tax paid on fuel purchased.
 - Restrictions will be in place to safeguard all personally identifiable information.
- What happens to Oregon's Road Usage Charge Program is ultimately up to the Oregon Legislature and, potentially, Oregon voters. Though the Senate bill (810) that created the volunteer program has no end date, there are no other programs or mandates in place right now.
- The Oregon Road User Fee Task Force researched lots of different possibilities for raising state transportation funding revenue, including tolling. The Task Force found that road usage charging was more fair and more sustainable, and follows Oregon's long-standing "user pays principle" of charging

		vehicle owners solely for their own use of the state's roadways.
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