

**BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
MORRIS COUNTY NEW JERSEY**

Resolution No. _____

Adopted October 14, 2015

OPPOSITION TO MOTOR FUEL TAX INCREASE

WHEREAS, Senate Bills S1865 Lesniak and S2051 Rice, and Assembly Bill A3886 Wisniewski propose increasing the motor fuel tax ("gas tax") in New Jersey, to fund the Transportation Trust Fund to cover infrastructure improvements, through extracting more revenue from the already overburdened taxpayers of New Jersey, costing the average motorist \$300 annually; and,

WHEREAS, any increase in motor fuels taxes in the current weak economy would present an undue hardship on the taxpayers of New Jersey and drive up the cost of delivery of various commodities, as well as the already high cost of doing business in the State of New Jersey; and,

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has a long history of raiding dedicated trust funds for other purposes, and there is no assurance that such revenues collected to support the transportation infrastructure would be secure from future raiding of this nature; and,

WHEREAS, in 2012, the State of New Jersey spent over \$2 million per mile to maintain and operate state roads, and ranked near the bottom in terms of efficient cost of maintenance disbursement per mile, capital bridge disbursement per mile; 45th in administrative disbursements per mile and legislation has been proposed to review these high costs; and,

WHEREAS, New Jersey ranks second in the highest tax burden in the United States with 12.3% of state income paid as state and local taxes per a Tax Foundation study, and has the highest or among the highest property taxes, income taxes and tolls; and,

WHEREAS, this high tax burden has resulted in a long period of economic underperformance including as recently reported by the census bureau median household income in New Jersey is 3% lower than 10 years ago (Star-Ledger, "NJ Residents earning less than they did 10 years ago", Sept. 21, 2015); and,

WHEREAS, instead of increasing an already intolerably high tax burden, the legislature should reduce expenses by acting on nearly 80 bills that have been introduced to reduce expenses and lighten the tax burden, including bills establishing a new formula for state aid to public schools based on enrollment (A-565), a bill to eliminate bonuses for unused sick pay for public employees (A-158), a bill to allow opt-out of civil service by local governments (Bucco A-159), a bill to direct non-dedicated portion of state realty transfer fee collections to municipal property tax relief (A-2333); and,

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Pension and Health Benefit Study Commission's February 24, 2015 report identified \$3.6 billion in savings by moving to private corporation "gold" level health plans from the current public employee "platinum" level plans; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Morris has doubled the number of miles of County roads repaved and maintained County bridges without increasing County taxes, and while reducing County debt, an example the State of New Jersey is urged to emulate;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Morris in the State of New Jersey as follows:

1. That the Board of Chosen Freeholders strongly opposes the aforesaid bills and any effort to subsidize the Transportation Trust fund through an increase in motor fuels tax.
2. The Board strongly urges the State of New Jersey to scrutinize the operation of its roadway maintenance and improvement system to increase its efficiency and reduce costs to the taxpayer.
3. The Board strongly supports legislation that would reduce state and local spending thus providing funds for state and local infrastructure and other pressing needs such as tax relief and investment in vocational skills and higher education.
4. That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the sponsors of these bills, to all our local state representatives, to the Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, the chairman of the Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the Assembly, urging them to oppose the aforesaid bills, and to the Honorable Governor of the State of New Jersey, Christopher J. Christie urging him to veto them should they be adopted;
5. That a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Boards of Chosen Freeholders of all the other Counties in the State of New Jersey, urging them to adopt similar resolutions of support.

I hereby certify this to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Morris at a regular meeting held on October 14, 2015.

Diane M. Ketchum, Clerk of the Board