

Senator:

My name is Frank Pagurko, and I write to you on behalf of the Rio Grande Foundation, an economic policy think tank based in Albuquerque. We work to promote the interests of the people of New Mexico through free market policy.

In the interest of everyone who lives and works in New Mexico, I strongly urge you to **vote NO** on SB 168, the “Increase Gas Tax” bill. The gas tax is inherently regressive and increasing the tax rate will only increase the harm done to disadvantaged New Mexicans. High-income individuals spend a smaller proportion of their income on gasoline, and the pandemic has shown that this demographic tends to be better able to work from home, reducing their reliance on transportation for job security. Wealthy New Mexicans are also much more likely to own electric vehicles, allowing them to avoid the gas excise tax entirely. To reduce the cost of roads and other public works projects, the legislature should repeal the Public Works Minimum Wage Act which artificially drives up construction and maintenance costs. The Rail Runner has also become a money pit, as it is far from profitable in the best of times and has sat useless for the past year due to the pandemic. Shutting down this costly project would free up funds for essential road projects.

Rather than raising transportation costs that disproportionately affect New Mexico’s disadvantaged communities, I encourage the legislature to cut unnecessary expenses. Please vote no on SB 168.



Frank Pagurko III