



Madison County Board members want strong opposition voiced on vehicle mileage traveled tax

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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County Board members want to send a strong message to Springfield opposing a vehicle mileage traveled tax.

Board member Tom McRae of Bethalto presented a resolution to the Executive Committee Wednesday night opposing any plan the state has for a vehicle mileage traveled, or VMT tax.

“We need to send a message to our legislators that we don’t want this,” McRae said. “It’s an invasion of our personal privacy and another tax in an already overtaxed state.”

The committee discussed the resolution, with several board members asking whether a current bill was pending on the matter.

McRae said whether a bill was current was not the point. He said due to the current election cycle, discussions on the matter was taking place.

He said DuPage County placed a referendum on the ballot asking voters if the county should oppose the creation of a statewide tax.

“It’s been brought up in the past and I’m sure it will be brought up again, it’s just a matter of when,” he said.

In 2016, Senate President John Cullerton introduced SB 3267, requiring all motorists to pay a VMT tax of 1.5 cents per mile. The proposal required drivers to either install a tracking device to monitor mileage or pay a flat annual rate of \$450.

The motivation behind the bill was a lack of sufficient funds to maintain the state's roads, due to the increase in electric vehicles and spending less money at the pump. Cullerton eventually killed the bill.

“High taxes are already killing Illinoisans,” Board member Mick Madison of Bethalto said.

In 2018, nearly 40 Illinois House members have signed a resolution (HR0766) opposing a VMT tax with a similar resolution is in the senate (SR1589.)

“I feel Madison County taxpayers would rather we speak out against this now, as opposed to waiting before it's too late,” Madison said.

Several states have proposed a VMT tax, but only the State of Oregon established one with its pilot program — OReGo, which has 5,000 volunteer motorists. Program volunteers pay a road usage charge based on the number of miles traveled at 1.7 cents per mile and receive credits for the state fuel tax paid at the pump (they still are required to pay the federal gas tax of 18.4 cents per gallon).

County Board member Chrissy Dutton of Bethalto said the resolution sends a message to the elected officials in Springfield.

“The VMT tax is a terrible idea,” Dutton said. “As a single mom who has a long commute to work in addition to running kids to various activities this is just another burden on working class families already spread thin.”

The committee voted 9 to 1 in favor of the resolution opposing the VMT tax. The County Board will vote on the resolution Wednesday.

McRae said the VMT tax is just another “straw on the camel's back” for Illinoisans.

“It's another tax that forces people to make a decision whether they want to live in this state,” McRae said.