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January 21, 2021

The Honorable Steve Hobbs
Washington State Senate
PO Box 40444
Olympia WA 98504

The Honorable Curtis King
Washington State Senate
PO Box 40414
Olympia WA 98504

Dear Senator Hobbs and Senator King,

We are writing to urge that if a Road Usage Charge (RUC) is enacted, any revenues derived would include protection under the 18th Amendment to the Washington State Constitution.

The Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC), which studied the feasibility of a RUC in Washington State, voted in support of 18th Amendment protection of RUC revenues in its final recommendations to the legislature in 2019.

The Commission correctly noted that if a RUC is intended to replace a gas tax, it should be “designed, implemented and the proceeds expended subject to Amendment 18.”

We agree.

Protecting those funds is the best way to ensure that a RUC “closely replicates the gas tax’s advantages as a funding mechanism.”

If a RUC is meant to replace the gas tax, then it should be treated in the same way, and like gas tax revenues, protecting a RUC under the 18th Amendment would honor the principle that users who pay the fee are ensured to receive the benefit.

The legislature has a long history of sweeping funds for other uses and the constitutional protection is the gold standard in ensuring drivers that those dollars are not at risk.

Protecting the RUC for highway expenditures directly ties the per-mile rate to actual road usage, thus providing much needed legitimacy to a new funding source that may be viewed skeptically by the public.

We recognize the importance of continued spending on infrastructure that promotes mobility and access to employment. We view infrastructure investments as part of Washington’s recovery to the damaging impacts caused by the COVID-19 response and we stand ready to work with lawmakers on finding a path forward for additional funding this session.

The Honorable Steve Hobbs

The Honorable Curtis King

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Protecting the RUC under the 18th Amendment ensures Washington's roads and bridges will continue to have dedicated funds for ongoing maintenance and safety improvements.

cc: Senate Transportation Committee Members

Sincerely,



The Honorable Steve Hobbs
The Honorable Curtis King
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