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Nebraska Fuel Tax Increase Debated

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - A proposed fuel tax increase is drawing support and criticism from Nebraska lawmakers, who remain divided over whether it's necessary to pay for roads and bridges.

Lawmakers began debate Tuesday on a measure that would phase in a 6-cent increase over four years, bringing Nebraska's total gas tax to 31.6 cents per gallon.

Sen. Jim Smith of Papillion says he proposed the measure as a "user fee" because it only applies to motorists when they fill their tanks. Smith says the fuel tax is pro-commerce and gives the state a pay-as-you-go option to pay for infrastructure.

Other senators say the tax hits hardest the motorists who can afford it the least. Gov. Pete Ricketts also opposes the bill.

Associated Press