

GEORGE PETROV

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- Take caution not to open attachments or links unless you know the sender AND were expecting the attachment or the link. With the looming recession and recent announcements of layoffs across industries, not to mention the highest inflation print in recent history, adding an additional tax on fuel will squeeze my budget that much harder! I drive hundreds of miles every week. At \$5.60 per gallon, fuel in Washington is already among the highest costing in the nation. If it were to go even higher due to this added tax, that my just crush me financially. I understand the idea is to help us live in a more environmentally clean world. But that goal must be put in perspective of people having the ability to make a living and put food on the table. All of the regular things we typically do have gotten much costlier recently, but our wages haven't risen to match the costs. The government's job is to do that which is in the benefit of its constituents, not to their detriment. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on rulemaking for Washington's new cap-and-trade program. I urge you to adjust this costly new policy to help minimize the impacts on Washington families, small businesses and working people across our state. Studies estimate that this program could increase the cost to manufacture gasoline and diesel fuels by as much as 47 cents per gallon in 2023. (Cap and Trade Program Analysis, Washington Research Council, Memo on E2SSB 5126, June 6, 2022.) This is on top of record high fuel prices that consumers are already paying at the pump! Washingtonians are burdened enough right now with skyrocketing inflation and an economy that is still suffering the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gas prices in Washington state are already some of the highest in the nation. Please consider delaying the inclusion of gasoline and diesel fuel for at least the first few years – as California's program did in order to delay the impacts on consumer fuels. Many experts believe the goals set by this program are too unrealistic. In order to meet its goals the program relies on a total ban of new gas, diesel and hybrid vehicles by 2035 – starting in 2026 with a requirement that 35% of new vehicles sold in Washington must be electric vehicles. Surveys show that a majority of Washington voters believe the state legislature needs to go back to the drawing board and revise the Cap-and-Trade program to make sure it will work as intended without placing such enormous cost burdens on Washington families and businesses. When it was first introduced, the state originally estimated that the Cap-and-Trade program would cost up to \$500 million per year – which the state would spend on a variety of climate-related programs. Recent estimates indicate that the program could now cost up to 4 times more – close to \$2 billion a year. (OFM Fiscal Note 2021, Ecology Preliminary Analysis, May 2022) Please do everything you can to reduce the costs of this new program to minimize burdens on Washington families and working people across our state. Thank you. Sincerely, GEORGE PETROV
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