



2012 AAA New York State Legislative Agenda

With the 2012 legislative session underway, the AAA New York State Association, serving 2.7 million motorists, supports the following initiatives:

Fix the Highway Trust Fund

Governor Cuomo recently unveiled a plan to invest a large amount of money into New York's transportation infrastructure. While the details of that plan have not been fully disclosed, it includes the creation of a New York Works Fund and Task Force to repair more than 2,000 miles of roads and improving or replacing more than 100 bridges. While our Association supports accelerated investments in infrastructure, we believe that state officials also need to restore the long-term viability of the state's Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund, which is near insolvency.

In fact, by 2013, three out of every four dollars allocated to the Trust Fund will be dedicated to debt service obligations. The Fund's long-term viability needs to be restored. One source of "pay-as-you-go" revenue that could be used to replenish the Fund is the current sales tax on gasoline, a tax that generates nearly \$1 billion in revenue not spent on transportation investments.

Hold Public Bridge and Tunnel Authorities Accountable

In an unprecedented move, on September 18th the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) drastically increased tolls at six interstate bridges and tunnels. Remarkably, the toll increases were proposed and implemented without the PANYNJ producing a Capital Plan. According to public statements by the Authority, the increased tolls were triggered to pay for cost overruns stemming from real estate re-development at the World Trade Center site.

While AAA has initiated federal court action to stop the increases, the process used by the Port Authority to implement these increases was rushed, mired in secrecy, and completely lacking in transparency. Accordingly, our Association believes elected officials need to explore new legislative remedies to ensure public authorities such as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey are held accountable to the public they serve. Among the measures we are supporting to restore public trust and accountability are S.5878A and S.6031 by Senator Lanza, A.8677A by Assemblyman Cusick, and S.6011 by Senator Avella.

Enact No-Fault Insurance Reforms

New York State residents pay some of the highest auto insurance premiums in the country. According to the Insurance Information Institute, No-Fault Insurance Fraud and abuse is costing insurers and consumers more than \$200 million per year and about 20% of the costs of every no-fault claim in New York State is attributable to fraud. In fact, New York's no-fault average claim costs – at \$8,690 per claim – are the third highest in the nation, 64% higher than the national median of \$5,289. Our Association believes that if state officials took strong steps to address fraud and abuse in the no-fault system, drivers could potentially save hundreds of millions of dollars.

One way state officials could fight fraud in the no-fault system is redirecting revenue generated from automobile insurance premium surcharges to the New York State Auto Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board, rather than diverting revenue to general budget purposes.

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Address Senior Mobility Issues

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2020 there will be approximately 39 percent more people over the age of 65 bringing an increased number of older drivers to our roads

AAA's *Lifelong Safe Mobility* campaign was initiated in response to the projected changes to the demographics of the driving population. This comprehensive initiative addresses the road, the driver and the vehicle. Our Association supports proposals that would establish procedures to identify and re-examine medically unfit drivers. AAA opposes re-testing based solely upon chronological age, but favors the establishment of procedures to help identify and retest drivers at high risk of a crash because of a medical impairment.

Improve DWI Laws

In New York State, drunk drivers kill about 400 people every year. According to a recent report from the University at Albany, each day an estimated 85,000 New York drivers choose to drive drunk. Further, recidivists constitute about one-third of DWI arrests. However, repeat offenders can still get away with driving drunk and not serving any jail time. Although state officials have enacted many groundbreaking laws to combat DWI – such as mandating the use of ignition interlocks – we believe more improvements in the law could be made such as mandating jail time for repeat DWI offenders. The legislative proposals we are supporting include S.3367/A.6196 by Senator Johnson and Assemblyman Amedore, and S.1930-A by Senator Alesi.

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AAA New York State is a legislative association whose membership includes five New York AAA Clubs. The Association's principal mission is to act collectively on behalf of AAA Clubs to promote traffic safety and advocate for our 2.7 million AAA members in the legislative, administrative and public policy areas. More information can be viewed by visiting www.AAANY.com