



For immediate release DATE

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MOTORISTS NOT SEEING BENEFITS OF RECENT GAS TAX INCREASES

Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey, date— Garden State motorists are not feeling the benefits to the state's roads and bridges from recent rate gas tax hikes, according to a joint survey from the Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825. Despite increases of more than 27 cents a gallon total since 2016, a third of all adults say the quality and safety of New Jersey's roads, bridges, and tunnels is getting worse. In addition, a third have experienced car damage as the result of potholes or other road imperfections in the past year.

The FDU Poll and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825 asked New Jersey adults a series of questions about their experiences on New Jersey's roads and bridges. Relatively few say things are getting better. Sixteen percent say the quality of the state's roads, bridges, and tunnels has improved, and fifteen percent believe their safety is better today. Around half say their quality (47%) and safety (50%) remains the same. The remainder say things are getting worse. Thirty-five percent believe the quality of New Jersey's roads, bridges, and tunnels have deteriorated, and 35 percent believe these vital pieces of the state's infrastructure are becoming less safe.

"New Jersey commuters are being taxed more with the expectation that they will see meaningful improvement to their commutes. Recently the American Society of Civil Engineers gave New Jersey infrastructure a grade of D and it is clear to the public that improvements aren't happening," said Gregory Lalevee, Business Manager, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825.

The condition of the state's roads, bridges and tunnels is hurting many motorists in the pocketbook. Almost four-in-ten report damage to their cars in the past twelve months from potholes or other road imperfections. About half (53%) did not experience similar damage.

"More needs to be done now," said Lalevee. "The importance of our state's roads, bridges, and tunnels is a bipartisan, economic issue. The time is now to seize upon this issue devoid of partisanship and move projects quickly."

Almost three-quarters (70%) rate the state's roads, bridges, and tunnels with the highest degree of importance to the local economy. However, similar numbers (63%) believe the government is not doing enough to maintain them. Majorities of both Democrats (69%) and Republicans (68%) believe infrastructure is very important to

New Jersey's economy, and majorities of those on the opposite side of the aisle also agree the state is not doing enough (57 and 72 percent, respectively).

When it comes to how to pay for road, bridge, and tunnel improvements, few say the state needs to raise more money. Instead, 83 percent believe legislators should do a better job spending what they already have. Unfortunately, however, there is not a lot of trust among the public for legislators when it comes to spending the gas tax money for its intended purpose. A third (34%) place no trust in government on this issue, with a quarter (28%) who extend "just a little" trust to policymakers. Barely a third (36%) say they have "some" or "a lot" of trust in legislators to spend the money the right way.

"Although Democrats are, on balance, more likely to trust those in government who allocate gas tax money than Republicans, and also believe that more money is needed to repair and maintain our state's infrastructure, majorities on both sides want policymakers to earn their trust by doing a better job with what commuters already give them," said Krista Jenkins, director of the poll and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

"Voters passed a constitutional amendment to ensure gas taxes were dedicated to transportation projects. State transportation officials are charged with carrying out the voters' will and it is safe to say right now commuters would give these officials a failing grade," said Lalavee.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by live callers on both landlines and cellular phones between May 29 and June 4, 2019, with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. Persons without a telephone could not be included in the random selection process. Respondents within a household are selected by asking randomly for the youngest adult male or female currently available. If the named gender is not available, the youngest adult of the other gender is interviewed. The interview was conducted in English and included 318 adults reached on a landline phone and 484 adults reached on a cell phone, all acquired through random digit dialing.

The data were weighted to be representative of the non-institutionalized adult population of New Jersey. The weighting balanced sample demographics to target population parameters. The sample is balanced to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region and phone use. The sex, age, education, race/ethnicity and region parameters were derived from 2017 American Community Survey PUMS data. The phone use parameter was derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.¹²³

Weighting was done in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrected for different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns. This adjustment also accounts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample. This first stage weight was applied to the entire sample which included all adults.

The second stage of the weighting balanced sample demographics, by form, to match target population benchmarks. This weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from

¹ NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2012-2016; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015; and infoUSA.com consumer database, 2012-2016.

² Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2015. National Center for Health Statistics. May 2016.

³ Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, January–June 2018. National Center for Health Statistics. December 2018.

having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population.³¹⁸

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 621 New Jersey adults is +/-3.9 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect is 1.31, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.5 percentage points. Thus, if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 45.5 and 54.5 percent (50 +/- 4.5) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects.

This telephone survey was fielded by Braun Research, Inc. with sample from Dynata.

Weighted Telephone Sample Characteristics

802 New Jersey Adults

Male	48%	Democrat w/ lean	47%	18-34	26%	HS or Less	32%	White	58%
Female	52%	Independent	25%	35-54	35%	Some College	29%	Black	13%
		Republican w/ lean	28%	55+	38%	College Grad+	39%	Hispanic	18%
								Other	11%

The sample was purchased from Marketing Systems Group and the research was funded by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll received an “A” rating from statistician Nate Silver’s FiveThirtyEight blog. The ratings measure both accuracy and bias for all major polling services in the United States, providing an update to similar research the poll watchers conducted in 2014. The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll’s “A” rating puts it in the top 14 of the more than 380 polling institutes reviewed and graded from A+ through F. The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll was found to have a 94 percent accuracy rate for predicting election results, and is one of only two A-rated polling institutes with zero bias to their rankings.

Tables and exact question wording and order

Would you say the QUALITY of New Jerseys roads, bridges, and tunnels is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?																	
	PID				Age			Education			Race/Ethnicity		Gender		Income		
	All	Dem	Ind	Rep	18-34	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	White	Non-white	Male	Fem	<75K	75K-<150K	150K+
Getting better	16%	21%	12%	12%	23%	17%	12%	21%	18%	13%	16%	17%	16%	16%	18%	17%	9%
Getting worse	35%	26%	40%	47%	24%	38%	39%	33%	34%	37%	39%	28%	36%	34%	28%	37%	45%
Staying the same	47%	51%	47%	40%	52%	44%	46%	44%	46%	49%	44%	53%	46%	48%	51%	45%	47%
DK (vol)	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0%
Ref (vol)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unweighted N	802	375	186	226	215	262	317	156	234	405	515	258	401	401	277	262	146

Would you say the SAFETY of New Jerseys roads, bridges, and tunnels is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?																	
	PID				Age			Education			Race/Ethnicity		Gender		Income		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	18-34	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	White	Non-white	Male	Fem	<75K	75K-<150K	150K+
Getting better	15%	18%	12%	12%	19%	17%	11%	17%	21%	11%	14%	19%	18%	12%	17%	16%	8%
Getting worse	30%	22%	38%	38%	20%	32%	37%	30%	28%	32%	35%	22%	31%	30%	26%	31%	38%
Staying the same	50%	55%	46%	46%	60%	47%	46%	47%	47%	53%	48%	55%	47%	53%	53%	50%	51%
DK (vol)	4%	5%	4%	4%	1%	5%	6%	6%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	3%	3%
Ref (vol)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unweighted N	802	375	186	226	215	262	317	156	234	405	515	258	401	401	277	262	146

In the past 12 months, have potholes or other road imperfections damaged your car, including the tires, or don't you drive?																	
	All	PID			Age			Education			Race/Ethnicity		Gender		Income		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	18-34	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	White	Non-white	Male	Fem	<75K	75K-<150K	150K+
Yes	38%	35%	39%	41%	42%	46%	27%	42%	36%	37%	37%	40%	38%	37%	37%	41%	38%
No	53%	54%	53%	53%	48%	50%	61%	43%	53%	57%	57%	45%	53%	53%	49%	55%	58%
Don't drive	8%	10%	8%	5%	10%	4%	10%	15%	10%	5%	5%	14%	8%	9%	13%	4%	3%
DK (vol)	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Ref (vol)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unweighted N	802	375	186	226	215	262	317	156	234	405	515	258	401	401	277	262	146

In your opinion, is the state doing or NOT doing enough to maintain and repair New Jerseys roads, bridges, and tunnels?																	
	All	PID			Age			Education			Race/Ethnicity		Gender		Income		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	18-34	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	White	Non-white	Male	Fem	<75K	75K-<150K	150K+
Doing enough	30%	35%	28%	23%	35%	30%	26%	27%	32%	29%	27%	33%	31%	28%	31%	30%	25%
Not doing enough	63%	57%	65%	72%	60%	63%	65%	64%	64%	62%	66%	59%	63%	63%	63%	63%	71%
DK (vol)	7%	8%	7%	5%	5%	6%	9%	9%	3%	8%	6%	7%	6%	8%	6%	7%	3%
Ref (vol)	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Unweighted N	802	375	186	226	215	262	317	156	234	405	515	258	401	401	277	262	146

Does the government need to do a better job allocating money it has for repairing and maintaining roads, bridges and tunnels OR does the government need to collect more money from taxpayers to repair and maintain New Jerseys roads, bridges, and tunnels?

	All	PID			Age			Education			Race/Ethnicity		Gender		Income		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	18-34	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	White	Non-white	Male	Fem	<75K	75K-<150K	150K+
Do better with what it has	83%	76%	84%	93%	85%	87%	79%	80%	85%	83%	83%	84%	82%	84%	86%	82%	79%
Needs more money	10%	15%	8%	4%	9%	8%	13%	12%	8%	11%	10%	10%	12%	8%	8%	11%	14%
DK (vol)	6%	8%	7%	3%	6%	5%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%
Ref (vol)	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Unweighted N	802	375	186	226	215	262	317	156	234	405	515	258	401	401	277	262	146

How much trust do you have in government to use the money collected from the tax on gasoline to improve the states roads, bridges, and tunnels? Do you trust them... READ LIST

	All	PID			Age			Education			Race/Ethnicity		Gender		Income		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	18-34	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	White	Non-white	Male	Fem	<75K	75K-<150K	150K+
A lot	7%	12%	3%	1%	6%	6%	8%	6%	7%	7%	6%	8%	8%	5%	8%	7%	5%
Some	29%	37%	23%	19%	32%	27%	28%	22%	31%	30%	28%	31%	25%	32%	29%	26%	34%
Just a little	28%	27%	28%	27%	29%	28%	28%	32%	24%	28%	26%	32%	27%	29%	28%	23%	29%
None at all	34%	21%	41%	50%	31%	36%	33%	35%	36%	32%	37%	26%	36%	31%	32%	41%	30%
DK (vol)	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	5%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	1%
Ref (vol)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unweighted N																	

How would you rate the overall importance of New Jerseys roads, bridges, and tunnels to the state’s economy? Is it... READ LIST																	
	All	PID			Age			Education			Race/Ethnicity		Gender		Income		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	18-34	35-54	55+	HS or less	Some coll	Coll grad+	White	Non-white	Male	Fem	<75K	75K-<150K	150K+
Very important	70%	69%	77%	68%	66%	69%	74%	67%	72%	71%	69%	74%	73%	68%	72%	69%	71%
Somewhat important	26%	29%	18%	29%	31%	28%	22%	28%	25%	26%	28%	24%	23%	30%	23%	28%	27%
Not at all important	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%
DK (vol)	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%
Ref (vol)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unweighted N																	