Taxpayers Oppose Hiking Gas Tax to Boost Highway Fund

By Charles Edward Chapel
46th District Assemblyman

California is one of 27 states which spend their highway user taxes on highways and freeways only. Any effort to divert highway user taxes away from the purposes stated in Article XXVI (26) of the constitution of the State of California will be opposed by the majority of the members of the California State Legislature.

The long - range freeway development plan recently completed by the State, and the various cities and counties of California, is based upon the assumption that the financing of the program will be accomplished within the framework of the present state highway user tax program. Under this plan, the State of California will relieve the cities and counties of their jurisdiction and financial responsibility for about 1,500 miles of their high priority roads and streets. This was accomplished through the work of the Joint Committee on Highway Problems, of which I have been a member for several years.

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THE EXPANDED Federal-state highway program is rapidly modernising highways. The effects of this tremendous construction program should relieve much of the congestion on most of the existing state, county, and city roads, streets, highways, and freeways, although it is impossible to actually keep up with the population explosion in California. Regardless of how much money we raise and spend, there always will be people who demand new routes and better roads on existing routes.

The overwhelming majority of the people who write to me from Inglewood, Westchester, Playa del Rey, El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, the Hollywood Riviera section of Torrance, Palos Verdes Estates, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Portugese Bend and Catalina Island agree on three fundamental policies:

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1. THEY OPPOSE any increase in state highway user taxes. Specifically, they oppose raising the gasoline tax one cent per gallon even though this could be earmarked to go to cities and counties for their city and county streets. True, members of city councils will past resolutions telling me to vote for this additional tax in order to place on me the responsibility for increasing taxes, simply because they do not want to be criticized for raising city and county taxes for this purpose.

2. They support the continuation of the existing state highway user taxes, just as they are, no more and no less.

3. They believe that the state highway fund should be protected from any further appropriations to local jurisdictions.

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THE LEAGUE of California Cities lobbyists get most of their money from the big cities. When the chips are down and there is any dispute between big cities and little cities, the League of California Cities stands squarely behind the big cities. Anyone who believes anything else does not face realities. Therefore, when the League of California Cities takes a stand on any issue, including highway, freeway and street problems, remember this fundamental truth.

Most people who write to me say that no mileage should be added to the present state highway system except where engineering and economic studies have revealed that adequate state interest warrants additions. Otherwise, we would have a vast amount of "pork barrel," piece-meal bills that would dissipate highway funds.

Long-range planning studies conducted by the Joint Interim Committee on Highway Problems show that through the year 1970, there will be little if any change in the present highway construction needs between northern and southern counties. Therefore, the majority of the experts agree that there be no change in the present split of 55% of the funds for the southern counties and 45% for the northern counties. I know that this is correct because I spent many weeks in 1957 and 1958 listening to detailed testimony on this subject.

* * *

FOR MANY, many years I have been strongly urged by people in the 46th Assembly District, and in adjacent districts, to expedite the construction of the San Diego Freeway. This is being done. Now I am getting letters from people complaining that the construction of the San Diego Freeway through Inglewood is creating a "traffic mess" which they want stopped. Obviously, such complaints are entirely unreasonable because we either get the San Diego Freeway or we do not get it. If we get it, tearing up streets to build the new Freeway is a necessary step in its construction.

It is like a man with a tooth that must be pulled. The tooth hurts until it is pulled, there is some pain during the pulling, but after the tooth is yanked out the man feels better and eventually forgets about the "traffic mess" in his mouth. Human nature is indeed an interesting subject. Fortunately, I have infinite patience and a sense of humor.

Mary Hancock Funeral Held

Funeral services for Miss Mary C. Hancock, assistant didector of student personnel at El Camino College, were conducted Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. at St. Cross Episcopal Church in Hermosa Beach by Rev. Richard S. Parker.

Miss Hancock died in a Torrance hospital at 10:20 a.m. Saturday morning following a lingering illness.

A resident of 15527 Cranbrook, Lawndale, for the past five years, Miss Hancock assumed the position as top woman administrator at the local college in September, 1951.

Born in Pateros, Wash., in 1910, she received her bachelor's degree from Central Washington College of Education in Ellensburg and her masters degree from Columbia University, N. Y. Prior to joining the El Camino administration, she served with the WAVES during World War II and was registrar and guidance counselor at Skagit Valleg Junior College in Washington for four years.

Funeral arrangements were handled by White and Day Colonial Chapel of Redondo Beach.

Pallbearers were Merl F. Sloan, Hamilton M. Maddaford, William L. Davies, David Brady, W. Holmes Smith and Dr. Albert S. Karr, all associates of the deceased on the college campus.

Following cremation, ashes of the deceased were taken to her home state of Washington.

Survivors include her mother, Mrs. Bus Hancock of Peshastin, Wash., and three sisters, Mrs. D. H. Kirby of Pheonix, Ariz.; Mrs. Alfred Sax of Peshastin, Wash., and Mrs. Joe Elordi of Nampa, Idaho.

TO HOLD DANCE

North Torrance Civic Improvement Assn., will hold a "Spring Frolic" dance Saturday from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Alondra Club, 16411 Prairie Ave. Music will be provided by Herb Warren. Tickets will be available at the door at $1.50 per person. The public is invited.

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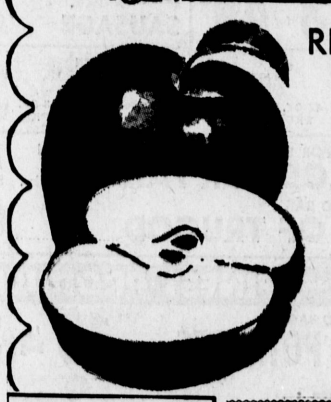

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