



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senator Malcolm Smith Supports Cut In State Tax On Gasoline To Provide New Yorkers Relief At The Pumps

Malcolm A. Smith

May 21, 2006

Senator Malcolm Smith (D-Queens) today announced his support of capping New York's state tax on gasoline to provide immediate and much-needed reductions in pump prices for New Yorkers, while renewing calls for a comprehensive state and national policy to reduce energy consumption and replace fossil fuels in the next ten years.

"While capping state taxes on gasoline offers New Yorkers some short-term relief, the bigger issue is finding ways to reduce consumption and replacing finite energy resources like coal, oil and natural gas with cheaper, renewable energy sources," said Senator Smith.

"For some time I've been calling on President Bush to launch a national initiative to make this country energy independent like President Kennedy's challenge to put a man on the moon back in the early 1960's. There probably is no greater issue facing

America today," said Senator Smith. "While setting energy policy is mainly a federal issue, there is much to be done here in New York to make our state less dependent on fossil fuels and more competitive economically."

Senator Smith noted he supported an amendment to the energy tax cut bill that would have dramatically reduced the State's own energy consumption. Unfortunately, the amendment was voted down by Senate Majority.

"There are those who think that we should be *raising* taxes on gasoline to encourage Americans to use public transportation and conserve energy," said Senator Smith. "While that may work in theory, I have a hard time telling my constituents who are already paying over \$3 a gallon for gas to spend more of their hard earned dollars. Instead, our government should provide more incentives to conserve energy and lead by example."

Senator Smith said state government could save millions of dollars a year by putting in place a common sense energy conservation plan to reduce its own consumption, which costs taxpayers \$300 million annually. For example, New York's agencies and authorities each year consume 50 million gallons of diesel fuel and 55 million gallons of heating oil.

"By reducing the size of the state's fleet of cars and gas-guzzling SUVs, banning non-essential travel by state employees, and lowering our thermostats by a few degrees in the heating season and raising it a few degrees in the cooling season, we could reduce our consumption significantly," said Senator Smith.

Senator Smith said the Senate Minority proposal includes a top to bottom review of the state's vehicle fleet, adding more alternative fuel vehicles, developing a comprehensive carpooling program, encouraging carpooling, mass transit and alternative work schedules, telecommuting, and investing in a public service campaign to help encourage conservation.
