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114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 679

To establish a Road Usage Charge Pilot Program to study mileage-based fee systems, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 3, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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A BILL

To establish a Road Usage Charge Pilot Program to study mileage-based fee systems, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Road Usage Charge Pilot Program Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The 2009 report of the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission recommends a transition away from the fuel tax to a more stable funding source, noting that a mileage-based fee system is the consensus choice for policy leaders.

(2) The 2008 report of the National Surface Transportation and Revenue Study Commission recommends further study of the implementation of mileage-based fee systems at the State level and of their compatibility with a national revenue system, noting that in the long run, a mileage-based fee system seems the most likely and appropriate method to be implemented.

(3) According to the Congressional Budget Office, the revenue raised from the gas tax since its last increase in 1993 has lost over one-third of its purchasing power due to increasing fuel efficiency, changing transportation patterns, and inflation.

(4) By 2030, the corporate average fuel economy standards will have reduced Highway Trust Fund receipts by more than 20 percent.

(5) The fuel tax revenue mechanism results in some industries paying more than their commensurate road use.

SEC. 3. ROAD USAGE CHARGE PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall establish a competitive grant program to be known as the Road Usage Charge Pilot Program (in this Act referred to as the ''Program'') to make grants to eligible entities to—

(1) conduct pilot studies of methods for recording and reporting the number of miles traveled by particular vehicles;

(2) conduct pilot studies of payment, enforcement, and privacy protection methods for mileage-based fee systems; and

(3) implement mileage-based fee systems in jurisdictions that have adopted a plan for such systems.

(b) APPLICATION REQUIRED.—To be eligible for a grant under the Program, an eligible entity shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such form, and containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require.

(c) SELECTION OF PILOT STUDIES.—In awarding grants under the Program, the Secretary shall select pilot studies that, in combination, explore means to address the following concerns:

(1) Protection of personal privacy.

(2) Ease of public compliance.

(3) Level of public acceptance.

(4) Geographic and income equity.

(5) Integration with State and local transportation revenue mechanisms.

(6) Administrative issues.

(7) Cost.

(8) Enforcement issues.

(9) Potential for fraud or evasion.

(10) Feasibility of implementation.

(d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to pilot studies that—

(1) serve as a model for broad implementation of a mileage-based fee system;

(2) address concerns of rural and urban user equity;

(3) involve multistate projects;

(4) have a high volume of enrolled vehicles;

(5) integrate with State and local revenue systems;

(6) integrate with local demand management plans;

(7) integrate with other intelligent transportation system technologies; and

(8) test the proposed revenue collection system by collecting and distributing revenue.

(e) REQUIRED MINIMUM FUNDS FOR PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS.—In awarding grants under the Program, the Secretary shall ensure that not less than 10 percent of funds available under the Program in a fiscal year are reserved for pilot studies carried out in conjunction with metropolitan planning organizations or regional transportation planning organizations.

(f) COST SHARING.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this Act shall provide funds, from non-Federal sources, in an amount equal to 20 percent of the amount of grant funds provided to the entity to carry out the activities supported by the grant.

SEC. 4. WORKING GROUP.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, shall establish a working group that shall—

(1) evaluate the technology platforms and standards used in the program and develop national technology standards for a road usage charge, as well as develop national privacy standards for a road usage charge that balance the effectiveness of revenue systems with user privacy;

(2) evaluate the costs of collection and administration of the methods studied in the Program and the success of such methods in achieving rural and urban user equity; and

(3) evaluate the potential of the methods studied in the Program to manage demand and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The working group established under subsection (a) shall be comprised of no fewer than 10 members, including at least 1 individual representing each of the following:

(1) The telecommunications industry.

(2) A highway user group.

(3) The data security and privacy industry.

(4) A privacy rights advocacy organization.

(5) A State or regional transportation agency.

(6) A national research and policymaking body.

SEC. 5. REPORTS.

(a) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the first disbursement of funds under a grant under the Program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress an interim report describing the progress of the Program, the progress of the working group established under section 4(a), and any data or results from the Program.

(b) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the first disbursement of funds under a grant under the Program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a final report containing data and results from the Program, an analysis of the feasibility of each method studied to be used as a mileage-based fee system, and the evaluations done by the working group established under section 4(a).

SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ''eligible entity'' means one or more of the following:

(A) A State government or political subdivision thereof.

(B) A local government or political subdivision thereof.

(C) A metropolitan planning organization.

(D) A regional transportation planning organization.

(E) A tribal organization.

(2) METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION.—The term ''metropolitan planning organization'' has the meaning given that term in section 134(b) of title 23, United States Code.

(3) REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION.—The term "regional transportation planning organization" has the meaning given that term in section 134(b) of title 23, United States Code.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) GRANT PROGRAM.—There is authorized to be appropriated $30,000,000 to carry out section 3, to remain available until expended.

(b) WORKING GROUP AND REPORT.—There is authorized to be appropriated $2,500,000 to carry out section 4 and $2,500,000 to carry out section 5, to remain available until expended.

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