Gas Tax Media Analysis

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Analytical Frameworks

- Media Standing
- Issue Frames
- Narrative Integrity
Data Analysis

• Word counts
• Thematic, content analysis (frames)
• Qualitative approach; interpretative, immersed, emergent
## Case Study States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Case Study Years</th>
<th>State Gas Tax at Time of Vote</th>
<th>Exec Position</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>For</td>
<td>Gov. Otter proposals ranging from 5-10 cents rejected by State House of Representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>For</td>
<td>Gov. Patrick proposal to raise gas tax 19 cents rejected by Legislature. Instead, Legislature raised state sales tax from 5 to 6.25 percent and allocated $275 million to transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>Against</td>
<td>Legislature approved an 8 cent increase to be phased in by 2011. Gov. Tim Pawlenty vetoed the bill. Legislature overrode Governor’s veto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>For</td>
<td>Gov. Ted Kulongoski proposed a 2 cents increase. Legislature increased proposal to 6 cents. Signed into law by Governor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>2006-2009</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Against</td>
<td>House approved a 5 cent increase. Senate changed to a 2 percent gasoline sales tax.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Executive Position, Political Parties & Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Case Study Years</th>
<th>Exec Position</th>
<th>Exec Party</th>
<th>Leg Party</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>For</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>Gas Tax Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Against</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gas Tax Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>For</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Gas Tax Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>Against</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>D &amp; L</td>
<td>Gas Tax Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>For</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Gas Tax Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>2006-2009</td>
<td>Against</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Gas Tax Approved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Media Standing: Attributions by Source

- Executive: 29%
- Legislative: 49%
- Int Group: 17%
- Individual: 4%
- Total/All years: 10% - 20% - 30% - 40% - 50% - 60%

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Media Standing: Attributions by Source

Idaho 2009: 64%
Mass 2009: 48%
NH 2009: 35%
Minn 2008: 51%
Oregon 2009: 50%
Vermont 2009: 75%

Idaho 2009: 3%
Mass 2009: 27%
NH 2009: 30%
Minn 2008: 24%
Oregon 2009: 13%
Vermont 2009: 19%

Idaho 2009: 4%
Mass 2009: 22%
NH 2009: 30%
Minn 2008: 24%
Oregon 2009: 4%
Vermont 2009: 3%
Frames

• “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendations for the item described.”

• Use of metaphors, catch-phrases, visual elements
Frame Contest is Between Government Actors

![Chart showing frame contest between government actors in various states.](chart.png)
Frames in Print News Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Gas Tax Increase</th>
<th>Opposed to Tax Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Crumbling infrastructure</td>
<td>• Taxes are wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economic Progress</td>
<td>• Cut Programs First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long-term solution</td>
<td>• Hurts the Economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pro-Gas Tax Frames

Crumbling Infrastructure

“Before the vote, Rep. Shelley Madore, DFL-Apple Valley, said that she couldn’t help but think of a man from her district Peter Hausmann who died in the Minneapolis bridge collapse, leaving four children behind. ‘Is his life worth a nickel a gallon? I’m telling you it is,’ she said.”

(Minnesota Star Tribune)
Pro-Gas Tax Frames

Economic Progress
“Backers said the package will sustain 4,600 jobs each year, or about 40,000 total over the next decade. ‘It’s the largest jobs package we will vote on this session,’ said House Speaker Dave Hunt, who took to the House floor to urge passage of the bill. ‘This will be an economic stimulus for workers at a time when they really need it.’”

(Oregonian)
Pro-Gas Tax Frames

Long-term Solution
“The 27-cent increase would have raised an estimated $702 million in annual revenue; the 19-cent hike would generate $494 million. With the smaller tax increase, [Massachusetts Governor] Patrick will have less money to do what he says the state needs: make long-term, structural changes to the transportation system and set the state on a course to long-term transportation financing stability.”

(Boston Globe)
Opposition to Gas Tax Frames

Opposed to taxes

“But Rep. Paul Kohls, R-Victoria, denounced the bill as a “taxapalooza” and lingered over the lyrics of a Beatles song: ‘If you drive a car, I’ll tax the street ... If you take a walk, I’ll tax your feet, 'cause I’m the taxman.’”

(Idaho Statesman)
Opposition to Gas Tax Frames

Cut programs first
“The chairman of the Senate's transportation committee said he doesn't support either of those proposals and does not intend to pursue tax increases until changes are made. ‘The focus needs to be on fixing the system first,’ said Senator Steve Baddour, a Methuen Democrat.”

(Boston Globe)
Opposition to Gas Tax Frames

Hurts the economy
“(Governor) Lynch said he told legislative leaders he would not accept the 15-cent tax increase passed by the House and under consideration in the Senate. ‘In very difficult economic times, the last thing we should do is increase the gas tax,’ he said.”

(Manchester Union Leader)
Pro & Opposition Frames by State

**Increase Approved**

- Oregon 2009: 95% Positive Frames, 5% Opposition Frames
- Minn 2008: 69% Positive Frames, 31% Opposition Frames
- Vermont 2009: 64% Positive Frames, 36% Opposition Frames

**Increase Rejected**

- Mass 2009: 72% Positive Frames, 28% Opposition Frames
- Idaho 2009: 62% Positive Frames, 38% Opposition Frames
- NH 2009: 48% Positive Frames, 52% Opposition Frames
Positive Frames by State

Vermont 2009: 74% Crumbling infrastructure, 0% Economic Progress, 24% Long-Term Solution
Minn 2008: 59% Crumbling infrastructure, 9% Economic Progress, 30% Long-Term Solution
Oregon 2009: 45% Crumbling infrastructure, 21% Economic Progress, 21% Long-Term Solution
NH 2009: 50% Crumbling infrastructure, 10% Economic Progress, 40% Long-Term Solution
Mass 2009: 73% Crumbling infrastructure, 6% Economic Progress, 19% Long-Term Solution
Idaho 2009: 79% Crumbling infrastructure, 12% Economic Progress, 9% Long-Term Solution

Crumbling infrastructure, Economic Progress, and Long-Term Solution.
Positive Frames by State

Gas Tax Approved

- Vermont: 74%
- Minn 2008: 59%
- Oregon 2009: 45%

Gas Tax Rejected

- Mass 2009: 73%
- Idaho 2009: 79%
- NH 2009: 50%

Key:
- Light Blue: Crumbling infrastructure
- Gray: Economic Progress
- Black: Long-term solution
Opposition Frames by State

- **Idaho 2009**: 14% (Opposed to taxes), 38% (Cut programs 1st), 48% (Hurts economy)
- **Mass 2009**: 15% (Opposed to taxes), 23% (Cut programs 1st), 32% (Hurts economy)
- **NH 2009**: 9% (Opposed to taxes), 32% (Cut programs 1st), 59% (Hurts economy)
- **Minn 2008**: 13% (Opposed to taxes), 29% (Cut programs 1st), 58% (Hurts economy)
- **Oregon 2009**: 0% (Opposed to taxes), 50% (Cut programs 1st), 50% (Hurts economy)
- **Vermont 2009**: 39% (Opposed to taxes), 36% (Cut programs 1st), 25% (Hurts economy)
Opposition Frames by State

Increase Approved

- Minn 2008: 58% (13%), 29%
- Oregon 2009: 50% (0%), 26%
- Vermont 2009: 39% (25%), 36%

Increase Rejected

- Idaho 2009: 38% (14%), 48%
- Mass 2009: 38% (23%), 62%
- NH 2009: 48% (32%), 59%

Legend:
- Opposed to taxes
- Cut programs 1st
- Hurts economy

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