

# Fill up now; gas prices in Calif. go up July 1

By Mallory Hoff, KCRA-TV

The pain at the pump is about to get worse for Californians – specifically, on July 1.

On Monday, motorists will pay an additional 3.5 cents a gallon – and it's not because of the cost of fuel, but rather, a tax increase.

“Happy Fourth of July,” motorcyclist Kevin Shallenberger said Thursday.

The increase comes after the state Board of Equalization voted to increase the excise gas tax, which will total 39.5 cents per gallon.

“Legislation that was passed in 2010 mandated that the excise tax be adjusted up and the sales tax adjusted down, to keep it revenue-neutral so that there wouldn't be an impact overall in the amount of tax drivers pay at the pump,” said Venus Stromberg, a spokeswoman for the state Board Of Equalization.

The board said the money will go back into the roads.

“The excise tax dollars that you pay to the state when you buy a gallon of gasoline go back to the state to fund highway and transportation projects,” Stromberg said.

But the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association president said motorists may not be getting what they pay for.

“They drive down I-5 and they still see those pot holes,” said Jon Coupal, president of the association. “We're paying very, very high gas taxes and not seeing that money diverted into the things that motorists use. It's a serious reflection of

the inability of California to govern itself.”

The situation will leave some with a financial dilemma.

“It’s hard to plan long trips or anything because it’s too much,” driver Judy Smith said.