

Opinion: California lawmakers and their taxes



Ted Gaines

By Ted Gaines

Following the conclusion of the 2017 legislative session, I'd like to highlight just a few of the ways the Legislature voted to increase taxes and make California less affordable.

Gas Tax (Senate Bill 1)

The Legislature passed and the governor signed a transportation proposal that imposes \$52 billion in permanent new gas taxes and user fees on motorists. Starting this fall, every motorist in California will pay an additional 12 cents per gallon of gasoline and 20 center per gallon of diesel. That might not sound like much, but with this and the increase in annual vehicle registration fees by as much as \$175 per vehicle, it adds up to an average of \$350 per household over the course of a year. If you're a commuter, live in the country, or own a business, the cost could be much higher.

Cap-and-Trade Extension (Assembly Bill 398)

The Legislature passed and the governor signed an extension of the state's cap-and-trade program. Fuels under the program already adds 11 cents to every gallon of gas. The new gas tax adds an additional 12 cents to every gallon (that number will

go up every year after 2021), and the cap-and-trade extension could add another 73 cents to every gallon of gas on top of that. While the rest of the country is paying \$2 a gallon for gas, we are going to be paying a dollar and a half a gallon just in taxes and climate fees. A large portion of the money collected through the cap-and-trade program has been allocated to fund high-speed rail.

Housing Package (Senate Bill 2)

Included in a package of housing bills was Senate Bill 2, which the Legislature has approved and sent to the governor for signature. The bill would impose a \$75 to \$225 “recording fee” on all real estate transactions. The fee would generate as much as \$258 million per year. Instead of addressing the housing crisis by reducing the obstacles to housing development, legislators have chosen to put the cost on the backs of California taxpayers.

Legislative Democrats have touted this year as ‘one of the most productive sessions in California history.’ I suppose this is accurate if you define ‘productive’ as continuing to pile on taxes and make California increasingly unlivable for businesses and hardworking working families. I will not give up. I will continue to stand up for California taxpayers that are getting nicked and dined at every turn.

Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou counties.