

# Business group supports gas tax hike

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The 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, a group of business members and town leaders advocating for the 32 municipalities located along Interstate 495, voted last week to support the proposed tax hike suggested by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick.

Executive director Paul Matthews said the partnership decided to vote to support a gas tax up to 25 cents, but with some restrictions.

"We wanted to narrow it down a bit," said Matthews. "We want (the money) to be dedicated to transportation needs...not just go into the state's general fund."

Matthews said the governor wants to have this tax approved by the end of March, so the partnership wanted to show their support.

"As a regional advocacy group, we've been fighting for transportation costs since our inception in 2003," said Matthews. "This can have tremendous long-term cost savings (for our area)."

Matthews said the Partnership, which includes Hopkinton Selectman Matt Zettek, Ashland Selectman Cassandra Sammons, Holliston Selectman Andrew Porter and several other town officials and local business members, speaks out in favor of policies that help the I-495.

"Transportation services are not what they should be," said Matthews, "and we hope (this gas tax) can improve it."

Other groups supporting the tax include the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, Massachusetts Business Roundtable, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, A Better City and National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, Massachusetts.

Last week, state Sen. Michael Knapik, D-Westfield, spoke on the Senate floor regarding business groups' support of the gas tax.

"You've got a group of nitwits down here saying it oughta go to a quarter," said Knapik. "Well, wait until the price is \$3.50 (per gallon) this summer and we'll see if that quarter that they're talking about in March makes any sense."