NOZZLE & WRENCH

WMDACAR

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AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON DC, MARYLAND & DELAWARE SERVICE STATION & AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR ASSOCIATION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

>> Recent Supreme Court Decision Limits Presidential Tariff Authority

>> SSDA-AT Working to Restore the Work Opportunity Tax Credit

>> Infrastructure Funding Remains Top Priority for SSDA-AT

I do urge ESD, vape sellers and anyone that sell energy booster to read bill HB1523/SB820, there are changes to advertising, product labels and fines are steep. Bill number will take you to any bill.

KIRK'S CORNER

Maryland Legislative Season 2026

By Kirk McCauley, Director Of Member Relations & Government Affairs

WMDA/CAR tracked 53 bills with most having a companion bill in the opposite chamber. Bills we tracked and monitored, looking for changes, the rest we either testified orally, written or both. Baltimore City bill SB279 started out as a 2-page authorization bill for City to take over tobacco regulation when we testified in the House and Senate. After all testimony, bill was rewritten into a 10-page bill that required tobacco sellers to receive permission from the city council and mayor to obtain a tobacco license yearly at a cost for permission to pay $300 for tobacco license. Cost for permission and procedure left up to Council and mayor. No testimony allowed on a new bill, mandated by leaders in the House and Senate.

I do urge ESD, vape sellers and anyone that sell energy booster to read bill HB1523/SB820, there are changes to advertising, product labels and fines are steep. Bill number will take you to any bill.

Any questions, text or Email Kirk. While SB279 is painful, overall WMDA/CAR saved our members their dues many times over.

Bill number and Cross File	Title	Pass/Fail/Tracking Date of taking affect
HB0004 (SB0566)	Vehicle Laws – Historic Motor Vehicles – Minimum Age	T/F
HB0066 (SB0373)	Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)	T/F
HB0069	Labor and Employment - Exemptions from Overtime Pay - Administrative, Executive, or Professional Capacity	F
HB0078 (SB0457)	Property Taxes - Authority of Counties to Establish Subclasses and Set Separate Rates for Land and Improvements to Land	F
HB0079	Climate Solutions Affordability Act of 2026	F

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HB0090 (SB0224)	Property Taxes - Authority of Counties to Establish a Subclass and Set a Special Rate for Commercial and Industrial Property	F
HB0092	Environment - Beverage Containers Connected with Plastic Rings - Restriction on Sale	T/F
HB0105	Public Health - Restaurants - Disclosure of Main Food Allergens	T/F
HB0161 (SB0058)	Property Tax Credit - Retail Service Station Conversions	P - June 1, 2026
HB0181	Public Health – Restaurants – Disclosure of Main Food Allergens	T/F
HB0188 (SB0003)	Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2026	F
HB0203	Labor and Employment - Training Repayment Agreements - Prohibition	F
HB0331 (SB0342)	Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program	F
HB0344 (SB0303)	Business Regulation - Sale of Motor Fuel - Pricing Signage	F
HB0371 (SB0708)	State Lottery - Courier Services - Licensure	F
HB0392 (SB0284 / CH0006)	Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2026	P - June 1, 2026
HB0417 (SB0435)	Criminal Law - Schedule III Controlled Dangerous Substances - Medetomidine and Xylazine	T/F
HB0476 (SB0474)	Civil Actions - Noneconomic Damages - Personal Injury and Wrongful Death	F
HB0572 (SB0432)	Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)	F
HB0681 (SB0290)	Baltimore City - Ordinance Enforcement - Fines and Penalties	P – Oct. 1,2026
HB0806	Vehicle Laws - Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program - Modifications	F
HB0918 (SB0279)	Baltimore City - Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices - Enforcement and Licensure	P – Oct.1, 2026
HB0969	Electric Vehicle Fuel Sold at Retail - Equipment Requirements, Units of Measure, and Fees	T/P - July1,2026
HB0974	Electricity and Gas - Retail Supply (Freedom from Monopolies Act)	T/F
HB0988	Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards - Repeal	T/F
HB1016 (SB0900)	Noncompete and Conflict of Interest Clauses - Licensed Architects - Employer Workforce Relocation and Out-of-State Employers	T/F
HB1040	Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Mandated Uses - Climate Change Programs	T/F
HB1048 (SB0866)	Public Health - Chain Restaurants - Sodium and Added Sugars Warning Icons and Disclosure and Notice	F
HB1199 (SB0590)	Study on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Economy-Wide Cap-and-Invest Program (Maryland Climate Crisis Equity Act)	T/F
HB1217 (SB0479)	Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards and Energy Use Intensity Targets - Exemptions	T/F
HB1225	Weights and Measures - Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment - Registration Fees	T/F
HB1229 (SB0886)	Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment - Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage	F
HB1268 (SB0781)	Environmental Permits - Requirements for Burden Analysis, Issuance and Renewal, and Public Participation (Cumulative Harms for Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)	T/F
HB1282	Tobacco Products, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices - Advertising to Minors - Prohibition	F
HB1303	Alcoholic Beverages - Class A License - Retail Establishments (Alcoholic Beverages Modernization Act of 2026)	F
HB1374	Alternative Fuel, Fuel-Efficient, and Electric Vehicles - Highway Use Fees	T/F

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8TH ANNUAL WMDACAR

GOLF OUTING

THE LONGEST DAY
alzheimer's association
Fundraiser

TUES., JUNE 9, 2026

RENDITIONS GOLF COURSE
DAVIDSONVILLE, MD

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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HB1391	Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program - Testing and Inspection - Grounds for Failure	F
HB1429	Consumer Protection - Right to Repair - Motor Vehicles and Farm Equipment	F
HB1472 (SB0779)	Better Small Business Employee Benefit Act of 2026	T/F
HB1479	Labor and Employment - Minimum Wage - Increase (Maryland Raise the Wage Act)	F
HB1512	Business Regulation - Rounding Cash Transactions - Remittance to Comptroller	F
HB1523 (SB0820)	Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission - Unauthorized Consumable Products - Enforcement and Seizure	P-July 1, 2026
HB1525 (SB0801)	Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, EmPOWER Energy Efficiency Programs, and Community Solar Energy Generating Systems	T/F
HB1576	Sales and Use Tax - Electronic Smoking Devices and Vaping Liquid - Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund	T/F
SB0003 (HB0188)	Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2026	F
SB0058 (HB0161)	Property Tax Credit - Retail Service Station Conversions	P – June 1,2026
SB0075	Alcoholic Beverages - Class A License - Food Retailers	F
SB0224 (HB0090)	Property Taxes - Authority of Counties to Establish a Subclass and Set a Special Rate for Commercial and Industrial Property	F
SB0249	Tobacco Product Licensees - Additional Licensure for Electronic Smoking Devices	P – Oct,1, 2026
SB0279 (HB0918)	Baltimore City - Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices - Enforcement and Licensure	P - Oct,1, 2026
SB0284 / CH0006 (HB0392)	Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2026	P – June 1,2026
SB0290 (HB0681)	Baltimore City - Ordinance Enforcement - Fines and Penalties	T/P – Oct,1,2026
SB0303 (HB0344)	Business Regulation - Sale of Motor Fuel - Pricing Signage	F
SB0342 (HB0331)	Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program	F
SB0373 (HB0066)	Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)	F
SB0432 (HB0572)	Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)	F
SB0435 (HB0417)	Public Health - Medetomidine and Xylazine Consumer Protection Act	T/F
SB0457 (HB0078)	Property Taxes - Authority of Counties to Establish Subclasses and Set Separate Rates for Land and Improvements to Land	F
SB0474 (HB0476)	Civil Actions - Noneconomic Damages - Personal Injury and Wrongful Death	F
SB0479 (HB1217)	Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards and Energy Use Intensity Targets - Exemptions	F
SB0566 (HB0004)	Vehicle Laws - Historic Motor Vehicles - Minimum Age	T/F
SB0590 (HB1199)	Study on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Economy-Wide Cap-and-Invest Program (Maryland Climate Crisis Equity Act)	T/F
SB0649 (HB0969)	Electric Vehicle Fuel Sold at Retail - Equipment Requirements, Units of Measure, and Fees	T/P - July 1,2026
SB0708 (HB0371)	State Lottery - Courier Services - Licensure	F
SB0779 (HB1472)	Better Small Business Employee Benefit Act of 2026	T/F
SB0781 (HB1268)	Environmental Permits - Requirements for Burden Analysis, Issuance and Renewal, and Public Participation (Cumulative Harms for Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)	T/F

SB0789	Motor Vehicle Administration - Advanced Driver Assistance Systems Repairs - Study	F
SB0801 (HB1525)	Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, EmPOWER Energy Efficiency Programs, and Net Energy Metering	F
SB0804	Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health - Revisions to Heat Stress Standards	F
SB0820 (HB1523)	Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission - Unauthorized Consumable Products - Enforcement and Seizure	P - July 1,2026
SB0834	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs, Services, and Plans - Moratorium	F
SB0841	Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act	F
SB0866 (HB1048)	Public Health - Chain Restaurants - Disclosure and Notice to Customers of Sodium and Added Sugars	F
SB0871	Civil Actions - Punitive Damage Awards - Surcharge	F
SB0886 (HB1229)	Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment - Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage	F
SB0893 (HB1026)	Business Regulation - Rounding Cash Transactions - Authorization	P - Emergency Bill, in effect when Gov signs
SB0912	Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program - Exemption for Vehicles Formerly Registered as Historic	F
SB1008	Alcohol and Cannabis - Cannabinoid Beverages Off-Premises Sales Permit - Establishment	F

Action Alert – Prince Georges Tobacco Retailers

Prince George's County Council Member Krystal Oriadha (district 7) has introduced a bill that would affect tobacco & ESD retailers, Class A alcohol retailers, storage facilities, and retailers that sell firearms.

CB-017-2026- B2026017 would require you to renew your use and occupancy (U&O) every year at a $5,000 cost if you sell tobacco, ESD or the other retail businesses listed. We are concerned with Tobacco — ESD part of this bill. This bill has a Consumer Price Index (CPI) attached to it also.

The bill has been amended from original form; I emailed bill sponsor to see if she intended for convenience stores to be included in bill. The bill states tobacco retailers and I was thinking her intent was to bring all the stand-alone tobacco shops into this bill, and language in bill included all retail sellers. Council Chairwoman Oriadha did not respond to my inquiry but did add amendment to bill that says convenience stores. I also contacted all council members, and no one responded.

Public hearing will be on Tuesday April 21, at 10am there will be a final council hearing. Chairwoman Oriadha is sending out a message to her district with a survey for support, saying that we only take from community, we do not give back. P.G, dealers do give back to the community, and all should send emails to the whole council and County Executive. Suppliers should do the same, after all they have invested millions of dollars into the county. If you are a dealer in Prince George's County and sell tobacco, you need to participate. Email, attend the hearing, testify or be there to support those that do.

Prince George's County Council – Reference No. CB-017-2026

ACT NOW - SEND EMAIL

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Edward P Burroughs: councildistrict8@co.pg.md.us
Eric C. Olsen: eolson@co.pg.md.us or councildistrict3@co.pg.md.us
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RVP, is it 9 or 10?

Federal Government has set required Reed Vapor Pressure (RVP) at 10 PSI across the country, normally it would 9.0 psi for summer gas and change over at rack would have started by now, but Maryland has not adopted the emergency standard as of this writing. EPA set a new standard to relieve some of increased costs of summer gas during Iran shut down of supply. Maryland has decided that cost is not a consideration for now, hopefully they see it differently before it's too late to stop changing over.

8th Annual Charity Golf Outing - June 9th at Renditions — Players and Sponsors Wanted

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MARYLAND LIVE CASINO & HOTEL

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8TH ANNUAL WMDACAR

GOLF OUTING

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TUES., JUNE 9, 2026

RENDITIONS GOLF COURSE ▪ DAVIDSONVILLE, MD

REGISTRATION FORM

7:30 A.M.	**Registration and Breakfast**
9:00 A.M.	**Shotgun Start** (4-Man Scramble Format)
1:00 P.M.	**Lunch with Prize Distribution**

>>> **$189 per Golfer/$700 for Foursome**

Price includes Greens Fee, Cart fee, bag drop, Breakfast and Buffet Lunch. Each Golfer will get two Drink tickets redeemable for Alcoholic/Non-Alcoholic Beverages at the Beverage cart. Refreshments will be available on the course. WMDA/CAR will assist in pairing individual registered golfers to make a foursome if requested.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Golfer #1: ______________________ Email: ______________________ Phone: ______________

Golfer #2: ______________________ Email: ______________________ Phone: ______________

Golfer #3: ______________________ Email: ______________________ Phone: ______________

Golfer #4: ______________________ Email: ______________________ Phone: ______________

☐ Please assist in making a foursome if less than 4 golfers listed above.

Contact Person:______________________ Company Name: ______________________

Mailing Address:______________________City:______________State:__________Zip: ______________

REGISTRATION FEES

☐ Golfers x $189 = $______________

☐ Foursome $700

☐ Lunch only $69

PAYMENT INFORMATION

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Account Name (print):______________________ Billing Zip Code:____________

Signature: ____

☐ Checking this box is my electronic signature

>>> ***REGISTER TODAY!***

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2026 General Membership Meeting

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

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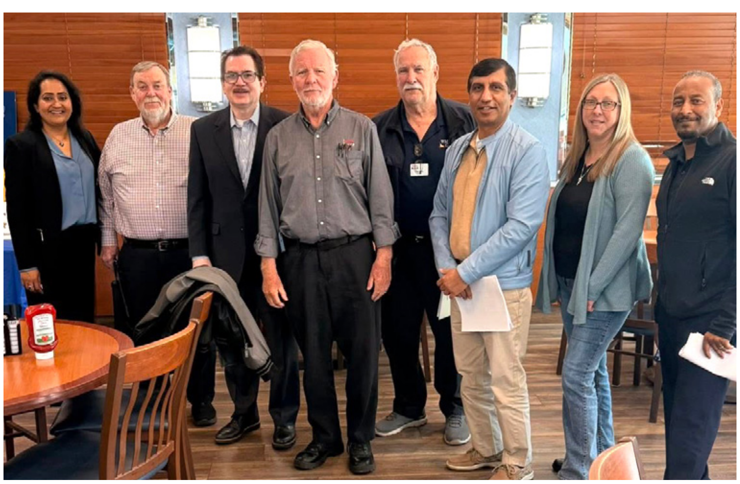


Recent Supreme Court Decision Limits Presidential Tariff Authority

Brought to you by Lynott, Lynott & Parsons, P.A.

The businesses prevailed in their claims in the lower courts, and the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case.

In a landmark decision impacting U.S. trade policy, the Supreme Court of the United States recently held that the president cannot use emergency economic powers to impose tariffs without clear authorization from Congress. *Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump* (607 U.S. ____ (2026)). The 6–3 decision, issued on February 20, 2026, concluded that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), enacted in 1977, does not grant the executive branch authority to levy tariffs. Instead, the Court reaffirmed that tariff powers belong primarily to Congress under Article I of the Constitution.

Soon after taking office, President Trump sought to address (i) the flow of illegal drugs from Canada, Mexico, and China, and (ii) trade deficits with U.S. trade partners. The President determined that the drug influx amounted to a public health crisis, and that the trade deficits had adversely impacted American manufacturing and supply chains.

The IEEPA authorizes the President to declare a national emergency and regulate foreign commercial transactions, such as freezing assets or imposing sanctions, in response to unusual threats from abroad. The President declared a national emergency as to both the drug trafficking and trade deficit problems and invoked his authority under IEEPA to respond by imposing tariffs. As to the drug trafficking tariffs, the President imposed a 25% duty on most Canadian and Mexican imports and a 10% duty on most Chinese imports. As to the trade deficit tariffs, the President imposed a duty on all imports from all trading partners of at least 10%, with many nations facing higher rates. After imposing each set of tariffs, the President issued several increases, reductions, and other modifications.

Several small businesses filed suit challenging the tariffs, alleging that they were not authorized by the IEEPA. The businesses prevailed in their claims in the lower courts, and the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. The ruling consolidated two cases—*Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump* and *Trump v. V.O.S. Selections, Inc.* The businesses argued that the tariffs exceeded statutory limits and represented an unconstitutional expansion of presidential power.

Writing for the majority, Chief Justice John Roberts noted that the Constitution assigns the authority to impose taxes and duties—including tariffs—to Congress. It was not disputed that the President has no inherent authority to impose tariffs during peacetime. The Court concluded that IEEPA's language allowing the president to "regulate importation" does not extend to tariffs, which are a form of taxation. The ruling invalidated the administration's use of emergency declarations to impose broad tariffs tied to issues such as trade deficits and drug trafficking.

Although six justices agreed that IEEPA does not authorize tariffs, the majority's decision was based on more than one legal rationale. Justices Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor, and Ketanji Brown Jackson concurred that the statute itself does not permit tariffs, while other justices emphasized constitutional limits on delegating Congress's taxing power.

In his dissent, Justice Brett Kavanaugh argued that the statute's authority to regulate imports should include the lesser power of imposing tariffs, noting that the president could theoretically impose more severe restrictions such as embargoes under the law.

The decision has immediate and far-reaching economic consequences. It is estimated that more than $175 billion in tariff revenue collected under the disputed policy could potentially be subject to refund claims from businesses.

The ruling also narrows the scope of presidential authority in trade policy, reinforcing Congress's central role in setting tariff levels. However, the Court's decision applies specifically to tariffs imposed under IEEPA, leaving in place tariffs imposed through other statutes.

After the decision, the administration began exploring alternative legal mechanisms to maintain trade pressure on foreign partners, including launching new investigations under the Trade Act of 1974 that

could lead to new tariffs based upon different laws.

The ruling is one of the most significant Supreme Court decisions on trade and executive power in many years, setting clearer boundaries on how presidents can use emergency powers to shape U.S. economic policy. ■

Petroleum & Refined Products

Brought to you by, Shipley Energy Commercial Solutions Team

Diesel crack spreads surged to levels not seen since 2022, a clear signal of how tight the physical market has become.

Following one of the coldest winters in recent memory, U.S. distillate inventories entered March already in a hole. Nationally, stocks sat at **119.9 million barrels — roughly 2% below the five-year seasonal average.** In the Northeast, the shortfall is sharper: PADD 1 distillate inventories were just **27.4 million barrels**, well below the five-year average of 32.6 million barrels and down ~900,000 barrels year-over-year. The heating season did its job, but it left the region with considerably less of a buffer than we'd normally carry into spring.

Now, just as stocks are lean, demand is accelerating. Domestic trucking freight is picking up as the seasonal cycle turns. Construction resumes, agricultural hauling kicks in, and consumer goods shipments ramp heading into the warmer months. This is the normal spring freight surge, but this year it's landing on a market with materially below-average inventory levels and tightening import availability. Atlantic Basin product cargoes are being pulled toward Asia rather than the East Coast, driving PADD 1 distillate imports down to just **104,000 barrels per day**. Diesel crack spreads surged to levels not seen since 2022, a clear signal of how tight the physical market has become.

Compounding the domestic picture: a major explosion at **Valero's Port Arthur, TX refinery on March 23** knocked out its 47,000 bpd diesel hydrotreater, removing significant Gulf Coast processing capacity from an already strained market. Meanwhile, the ongoing Middle East conflict and closure of the Strait of Hormuz sent WTI above **$100/barrel** for the first time since 2022, with Brent posting its largest monthly gain since 1988. Session highs reached **$119.48 crude, $4.47/gallon** heating oil. The IEA coordinated the largest emergency reserve release in history (400 million barrels) but at 20 million barrels per day of disrupted global supply, that is a buffer, not a solution. National on-highway diesel reached **$5.375/gallon** for the week of March 24.

Institutional views are divergent but skewed toward sustained near-term strength. **Morgan Stanley** sees crude staying in the **$100–$110 range for two to three months minimum**, with normalization taking at least a month post-ceasefire. **Goldman Sachs** revised its 2026 Brent average to **$85/bbl** and warns prices could stay in triple digits for years if the Strait remains a persistent threat. The **EIA's base case** has Brent above $95/bbl through Q2 before falling toward $70 by year-end. A positive note heading into spring: the **EPA confirmed the E15 summer fuel waiver** for the fifth consecutive year, effective May 1, providing several cents per gallon of relief at the pump.

Bottom line: Post-winter stocks are lean, import barrels are scarce, the freight cycle is turning, and a refinery outage removed capacity at exactly the wrong time. The forward curve, with October WTI near $77 and well below prompt, signals the market expects relief as the year progresses, but the next few months carry real supply risk. We are taking cues from the [2022] playbook: **keep your sales cycle short, buy what you need, and price through inventory before the next load or contract.** April 6, the Trump administration's deadline for the Strait of Hormuz, is the next critical catalyst. Weather forecasts and import arrival data will dictate the near-term moves. ■

“We’ve Been Here Before”

Brought to you by Tim Jancius, Spigler Petroleum Equipment, LLC

By Tim Jancius

Turn on the news, check the markets, or listen to industry chatter, and you’ll hear a familiar tone—uncertainty.

Global tensions, supply concerns, price swings… it creates noise. And with that noise often comes hesitation.

But if you’ve been in this industry long enough, you know something important:

We’ve been here before.

A Different Way to Look at It

Let’s take a step back and look at it from the customer’s perspective.

If the average fill-up is around 12 gallons, and fuel prices climb by even $2.00 per gallon compared to more stable periods, that’s roughly $24 more per visit.

That’s real money—especially in an economy where many families are already watching every dollar.

And while customers feel that increase immediately, operators are often working within tight margins themselves—which makes every decision even more important.

Moments like this don’t just test our industry—they give us a chance to respond differently.

An Opportunity, Not Just a Challenge

Moments like this don’t just test our industry—they give us a chance to respond differently.

Instead of viewing higher prices strictly as a challenge, there’s an opportunity to lean in and connect with customers in a more thoughtful way.

To show them:

- We see what’s happening
- We understand the pressure
- And we’re paying attention

Because customers notice how businesses respond during times like these.

Smart Ways to Add Value Without Giving It Away

In times like these, it’s not about cutting into already tight margins—it’s about being strategic with how value is presented.

The strongest operators understand that you don’t have to give away profit to improve the customer experience.

Instead, it can be as simple as:

- Highlighting high-margin items as part of a "value" offer
- Creating bundles that increase total ticket while still feeling like a deal
- Using loyalty programs to reward repeat visits rather than one-time discounts
- Promoting items customers already buy—but in a way that feels intentional

These aren't giveaways.

They're smart business decisions that create a better experience for the customer while still protecting the bottom line.

Changing the Moment

For many customers, fueling up has become a moment of frustration.

But what if we could shift that moment—even slightly?

What if instead of leaving with just that feeling of "that hurt," they also walked away thinking:

"At least I got something out of it."

"At least this place tries."

That's where perception starts to change.

And perception, over time, becomes preference.

Moving Forward with Intention

We don't control global markets.

We don't control supply chains.

But we do control how we show up for our customers every day.

And in times like these, the operators who stand out won't necessarily be the ones who avoid the pressure—

They'll be the ones who respond to it with intention.

Final Thought

We've been here before.

The difference this time may not be the challenges we face—

…but how we choose to meet them.

"Sometimes the best way to fight pressure at the pump… is by creating value everywhere else." ■

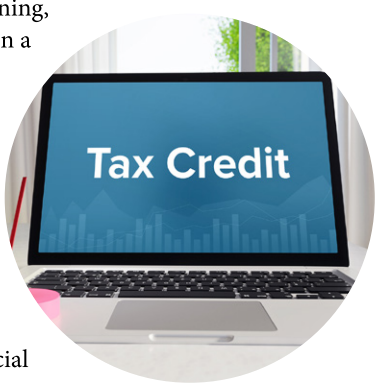
SSDA-AT Working to Restore the Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is designed to incentivize employers to hire individuals from targeted groups who have historically faced barriers to employment.

By Roy Littlefield IV

SSDA-AT representing WMDA/CAR on the federal level, has been actively engaged in efforts to restore the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), which expired at the end of 2025, and is advocating for its reinstatement during the current Congress. This remains a critical initiative for our industry and the broader business community, as many employers rely on this long-standing federal tax credit to support their hiring and workforce development efforts.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is designed to incentivize employers to hire individuals from targeted groups who have historically faced barriers to employment. These groups include veterans, individuals receiving public assistance, and others who may struggle to enter or re-enter the workforce. By offering a federal tax credit based on a percentage of wages paid during an employee's first year, WOTC helps offset the initial costs associated with hiring and training, making it easier for businesses to expand their workforce in a meaningful and inclusive way.



For many within our industry, WOTC is not simply a tax benefit, it is a practical and widely used tool that supports day-to-day hiring decisions. Employers who take advantage of the credit are better equipped to invest in new employees, provide training opportunities, and build a more stable and reliable workforce. At the same time, the program creates pathways to employment for individuals who might otherwise be overlooked, delivering real economic and social benefits to communities across the country.

The expiration of WOTC at the end of 2025 has created uncertainty for employers who have come to depend on the program as part of their workforce strategy. Without the credit, businesses face increased hiring costs and fewer incentives to bring on individuals from targeted populations, potentially limiting opportunities for those who benefit most from the program. Restoring WOTC during this Congress is essential to providing the certainty and stability employers need to continue making these important hiring decisions.

SSDA-AT strongly supports the restoration and long-term extension of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. We believe that reinstating this program will help ensure that businesses in our industry can continue to grow, invest in their workforce, and contribute to stronger local economies. Just as importantly, it reaffirms a shared commitment to expanding access to employment and supporting individuals who are working to build better futures for themselves and their families.

As Congress considers tax and workforce policies, SSDA-AT will continue to work with industry partners and policymakers to highlight the importance of restoring WOTC. This is a proven, effective program that delivers tangible benefits, and its reinstatement should be a priority. Restoring WOTC in this Congress is not only sound economic policy, it is a necessary step toward sustaining a strong, inclusive, and opportunity-driven workforce. ■

EDITORIAL

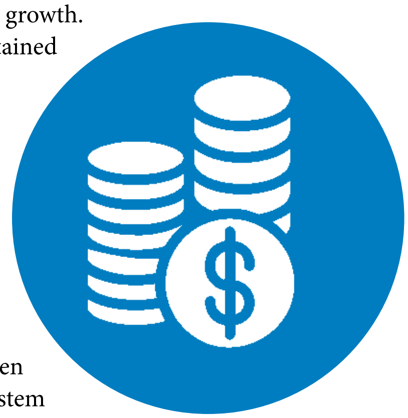
Infrastructure Funding Remains Top Priority for SSDA-AT

By Roy Littlefield III

> *While there is a clear need for reliable funding sources, it is important that these solutions are balanced and do not place an undue burden on the businesses that depend on the transportation system every day.*

As the final year of the current five-year surface transportation funding bill approaches, SSDA-AT representing WMDA/CAR federally, is actively working to support the passage of a strong and forward-looking infrastructure package in Congress this year. This is a critical moment for policymakers to build on prior investments and ensure that the nation's transportation network continues to meet the needs of businesses, consumers, and communities.

A well-funded infrastructure program is essential to the continued success of our industry. Roads, bridges, and transportation systems serve as the foundation of commerce, allowing for the safe and efficient movement of goods and people. For businesses in our sector, infrastructure has a direct impact on daily operations, costs, and long-term growth. Maintaining and improving these systems through sustained federal investment is vital to keeping the economy moving and competitive.



As Congress considers how to fund the next infrastructure package, it is equally important to carefully evaluate any proposed revenue measures. SSDA-AT is closely monitoring the potential for new or increased taxes and fees that could negatively impact the industry. While there is a clear need for reliable funding sources, it is important that these solutions are balanced and do not place an undue burden on the businesses that depend on the transportation system every day.

Finding the right balance between strong investment and fair funding will be essential. SSDA-AT supports an approach that delivers meaningful infrastructure improvements while also protecting the economic health of the industry. Thoughtful policy decisions can improve safety, increase efficiency, and support

economic growth without creating unintended consequences for employers and consumers.

With the current authorization nearing its end, it is important that Congress act in a timely manner. Uncertainty or short-term extensions can make it difficult for businesses and public agencies to plan for the future. Passing a new infrastructure bill this year will provide the stability needed to move forward with important projects and long-term investments.

SSDA-AT plans to be actively involved in discussions throughout this process. By working with policymakers and industry partners, the association will continue to advocate for a strong infrastructure program that reflects the needs of its members. Ensuring that the industry has a voice in these conversations will be key to shaping effective and balanced legislation.

This year presents an important opportunity to strengthen the nation's infrastructure and support continued economic growth. SSDA-AT remains committed to advocating for a robust program while keeping a close watch on policies that could impact the industry, and to ensuring that Congress delivers a solution that works for all stakeholders. ■

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