



[Jonathan proposes reinstating the vehicle license fee that Governor Schwarzenegger eliminated back in 2003. The repeal was highly successful in 1\) getting Schwarzenegger elected governor and 2\) contributing to the destruction of the state's fiscal health. But even reinstating the fee is unlikely to help transit. With the state's huge budget shortfall, that money would likely be used to fill up the black hole that is the state budget, and the legislature would surely raid any extra money for non-transit spending.](#)

A better option would be to get the feds to pay for transit. The long-awaited transportation reauthorization bill [may be taken up by the congress at the end of this year](#). This bill sets forth a once-every-five-years plan to spend the roughly \$250 billion in gas tax revenue collected by Uncle Sam. The current formula for spending goes something like this: 80% for highways, 20% for mass transit. Reverse that formula, or even make a dent in equalizing it, and you would see a transportation revolution in the United States. Even better for low-income bus riders: get the federal government to commit to spending some of that mass transit money on operating subsidies. Currently, the federal government will only spend money on capital expenses, like buying new buses or building new rail lines. Federal operating subsidies would immediately lower public transit fares across the country, thereby boosting ridership and eliminating hardship for the working poor.

Sure, it may be a long shot. But less so than asking Californians to pay more money for their cars.