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Sen. Valde Garcia: Taxes aren't option on roads

Sen. Valde Garcia
is a Howell Republican.

I am responding to "Higher gas tax plan fuels debate," (LSJ, March 3). In this story, the more specific issue of Michigan's gas tax was discussed: Should the Legislature raise Michigan's gas tax to help fund our road system?

I am quoted as supporting eliminating the gas tax and replacing it with a sales tax increase.

I did support the complete elimination of the current 19-cent Michigan gas tax, which would have given drivers a desperately needed break at the pump. In return, the Legislature could have raised the sales tax by 1 cent to replace those road funding dollars.

It would have made it less painful for Michigan citizens to help fund road repairs.

However, that was an idea I proposed last year as part of a comprehensive budget proposal. The Legislature and the governor chose to go in a different direction. The result is today we have fewer dollars to deal with greater road needs.

This year, the Legislature is faced with different challenges and is looking for different solutions. Given the fact that we raised taxes last year, the last thing we should consider is raising taxes again - for any reason.

Unfortunately, some of your readers believe that I now support either raising the gas tax or the sales tax for fixing our roads. Again, neither is true.

In retrospect, it is my mistake for not making it clear enough to the reporter that my proposal was for last year, not this year. For that error, I take full responsibility.

The bottom line is I will not support raising taxes again.

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