

NEWSBREAK

March 2022 Publication of the Minnesota Professional Towing Association



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MPTA Legislative Session Report



The 2022 Session is off to fast and furious start! With a budget forecast now standing just over \$10 Billion, who knows what is in store for the remainder of the 2022 Legislative Session?

MPTA has been very busy even before the session began. In early December MPTA lobbyist Rob Leighton and Executive Director met with Senator Jasinski (R-Fairbault) and Senate Transportation Chairman, Senator Newman (R-Hutchinson). Senator Jasinski is the chief author of S.F. No. 700 and S.F. No. 2623.

S.F. No. 700

S.F. No. 700 is a bill for an act relating to transportation; expanding impounded vehicle charges to include recovery and storage of a motor vehicle and its cargo and accident cleanup, amending current statutes 2020, sections 168B.045; 168B.07, Subd. 1.

MPTA Executive Director, President Ron Gardas Jr., MPTA member Brett Letourneau and John Grindeland of Twin Cities Transport & Recovery testified on S.F. 700 in the Senate Transportation Committee. With a few questions from DFL Senators, Chairman Newman held S.F. No 700 for inclusion in the Omnibus Transportation bill. (Bill will not have to go through additional Senate hearings) Next stop, companion bill in the House.

S.F. No. 2623

In the same Committee, S.F. No. 2623 was introduced as a bill for an act relating to transportation; exempting towing and recovery vehicles from certain motor vehicle weight limitations; amending Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 169.87, by adding a subdivision.

(continued on page 4)

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**If you would like to make a
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efforts, please send your donations to:**

**MPTA
2886 Middle Street
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Message From MPTA President, Ron Gardas Jr.

We can start seeing the light at the end of the tunnel as this winter has been a long cold one. I for one am looking forward to warmer weather. The towing industry had a turbulent winter season with our number one problem, safety on the side of the roads. MPTA has numerous members that have had trucks or personal stuck on the side of the road. Just a reminder to be vigilant on the side of the road keeping your head on a swivel. Work from the non-traffic side of the road always using warning lights in a manor directing traffic. Having hundreds of flashing lights going in every direction does not help. We need to give ourselves the best chance at safety.

Just as in every legislative session, the MPTA has some good things and some not so goods things going. MPTA has had two bills heard in the Senate and one of our bills heard in the House. One bill relates to spring overweight exemptions and the other a lien on the motor vehicle for the value of the towing, recovery of the vehicle, cargo, storage of cargo and vehicle along with the accident clean-up site. MPTA always on the defense, legal aid trying to expand the “relief based on need” bill, and the other is the state cracking down on private property tows. Lance Klatt will be sending out a legislative report on these as well.

MPTA ‘s training forecast for 2022 is looking like we will host our “standard” schools (Intro to Light-Duty, Intro to Heavy-Duty, Advanced light-duty) and we are working with Tom Luciano for an Advanced Heavy-Duty school in the fall. With Covid fading MPTA is trying to continue outstate meetings so we can meet face to face with our members.

Be safe out there, and spring is around the corner!

Ron Gardas Jr.

President – Minnesota Professional Towing Association

Vice President, Heavy Operations- Twin Cities Transport & Recovery



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All Employers Are Required to Display Federal and State Postings

All employers are required to post certain federal and state postings.

On a federal level, if an employer has less than 50 employees, they are required to post 5 notices: Fair Labor Standards Act; Employee Polygraph Protection Act; Equal Employment Opportunity; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act; and Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

If an employer has 50 or more employees, federal law requires that they also post a notice related to the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Please refer to your Labor Posters for more information-

Each state has varying requirements on what notices must be posted.

(continued from front page)

Basically, a commonsense bill allowing our Towing members the ability to do their jobs in the winter months without worrying about law enforcement ticketing or giving our towing members a warning for being overweight. As previously meetings were held with Senator Jasinski, chairman Newman and in the House, Chariman Hornstein (D -Minneapolis) and House author Representative Baker (R- Willmar) all concerned with the language we presented before session. MPTA Lobbyist Rob Leighton was able to work with MNDOT on our bill as MNDOT found an opportunity as MNDOT suggested moving some existing sections of law into our section relating to seasonal load restrictions. MNDOT suggested language the exemption only apply to towing and recovery vehicles that do not exceed a weight of 20,000lbs. per single axle.

In addition to MNDOT's suggested 20,000lb axle weight limit, language was also added to as the exemption only applies to when a law enforcement agency makes a request to move the vehicle. It's not perfect, but it's a start. Not did MPTA have to lobby MNDOT, but also the MN Association of Townships and the Association of MN Counties. Both are neutral on our bill. After testimony, S.F. No. 2623 is laid over for inclusion in the Omnibus Transportation bill. (No more hearings in the Senate)

H.F. No. 2992

H.F. No 2992 is the Companion bill of S.F. No. 2623. Same language, and same result. MPTA Executive Director and MPTA board member, Lance Burda testified in the House Transportation Committee. After testimony and a few questions, H.F. 2623 is laid over for inclusion for the Omnibus Transportation bill. (No more hearings in the House)

H.F. No. 3134

A bill for an act relating to transportation; amending certain requirements governing retrieval of towed vehicles and towed vehicle contents; amending Minnesota Statutes 2020, sections 168B.011, by adding a subdivision; 168B.051, by adding a subdivision; 168B.07, subdivisions 1, 3, by adding a subdivision.

H.F. No. 3134 is always near and dear to the members of the MPTA. Once again Legal Aid (Ron Elwood) just won't go away. Back in 2008, Legal Aid brought forth a "Retrieval of Contents" bill to the table without much negotiating between MPTA and Legal Aid.

Before the hearing, MPTA Legal Counsel, MPTA Lobbyist Rob Leighton and Executive Director spent hours and several video conferences trying to find common ground in which both sides can agree with. In the end, Legal Aid didn't like what we were proposing as an amendment to the bill. MPTA Executive Director testified stating we have been trying to find common ground as the MPTA doesn't see this as being a widespread problem in the industry. After much discussion, author of the bill didn't add the amendment to the bill we negotiated. MPTA will do it's best to kill this bill in the senate.

February Economic Forecast

On Monday, Governor Walz and the leadership of the Minnesota Office of Management and Budget formally released the February Economic Forecast. The forecast will provide the Walz Administration and the Minnesota Legislature with the fiscal roadmap necessary to design a supplemental budget, bonding bill and potentially some form of tax relief. The good news, since the November Forecast Minnesota's budget surplus has continued to grow. Over the past few months, Minnesota has added an additional \$1.5 billion dollars to the state's surplus. This is on top of the billions of dollars the state has put away into budget reserves, stadium reserves and rainy-day funds. This also does not include the roughly \$1.2 billion in unspent federal COVID funds the Legislature and Governor left unspent at the end of the 2021 Legislative Session. This means, there is roughly \$10.4 billion dollars (20% of the state's biennial budget) available for the Legislature and Walz Administration to divvy up in the coming weeks.

The economist who prepared the report did raise a few concerns with the projections. Given the timing of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the wars impact on energy pricing and other commodities was not factored into the report. Economist also pointed out Minnesota law prohibits the factoring of inflation into government spending, the forecast therefore does not account for approximately \$1.1 billion in inflationary costs. Cautionary concerns aside, the state continues to be flush in cash and the ongoing projections show a structural surplus of more than \$6 billion for fiscal years '24 and '25.

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The real fight began on Monday, GOP members of the Legislature are calling for ongoing, long-term tax relief. The Senate GOP Majority is calling for a dramatic reduction in the lowest income tax tier and the elimination of the income tax on social security benefits. Their proposal would move the lowest rate from 5.35% to 2.8%. The GOP proposal would leave untouched Minnesota's three remaining income tax brackets. Governor Walz today raised the ante on his proposed Walz Checks, suggesting \$500 per individual and \$1,000 per couple. His plan calls for checks being issued in early summer. The House and Senate DFL voiced a more cautious approach and suggested it may be best to protect against future financial storms by putting more money into Minnesota's Budget Reserves.

Special Election – First Congressional District

March 1st starts the two-week filing period for candidates looking to run in the August Special election, to fill the First Congressional District seat left open with the recent passing of Congressman Hagedorn. The Special Election will be held on August 8th, which is also the date of Minnesota's Primary Election Day. The winner of the Special Election will complete the remainder of Congressman Hagedorn's 2020 term. In November, a new member of Congress will be elected in a First Congressional District, with district lines that vary from the August Special Election.

New Legislative District Maps

While public policy has been the primary focus of the session, the recent announcement of the newly drawn Congressional and Legislative maps by the Minnesota Courts has been a big distraction. In the Minnesota Senate, which has sixty-seven members, twenty members of the Legislature found themselves paired with another member of the Senate. The new Senate maps have brought about some significant announcements of retirements by members of the Senate. Those announcements include, Senator Julie Rosen, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Melisa Lopez-Franzen, the newly minted Senate Minority Leader, Senator Scott Newman, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and Senate President David Osmeck. More announcements are likely in the coming days.

The House was not spared drama from their own maps. There are 134 members of the Minnesota House, at this point forty members of the House are paired with another member. House members have been slower in announcing their retirements. Most announcements by House members, have been announcements of campaigns for open seats in the Minnesota Senate. The fallout from re-districting will linger for the next few weeks.

As Traffic Deaths Increase, US DOT Releases National Roadway Safety Strategy

According to estimates from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), traffic deaths increased by 12% in the first 9 months of 2021 vs. 2020; a record high. This represents an estimated 31,720 people who died in motor vehicle traffic crashes from January through September 2021. That is the highest recorded number since 2006 and the largest percentage increase since the Fatality Analysis Reporting System began collecting data in 1975. This continues a trend all too familiar to the towing and recovery industry, showing that traffic deaths have been rising throughout the pandemic even though American's are driving fewer miles.

To address this issue, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced a new National Roadway Safety Strategy to reduce and prevent death and injury on the nation's roadways. The three-year comprehensive strategy is broken down into five categories – safer people, roads, vehicles, speeds, and improving post-crash care. The initiative will require the coordination of state and local governments and builds off funding from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that was signed into law last year, including \$4 billion for the Highway Safety Improvement Program. In making this announcement, Department of Transportation Secretary Buttigieg said the DOT would provide guidance as well as \$5 billion in grants for states to lower speed limits and create safer road designs.



2022 DOT Random Testing Rates Notice

- ODAPC's web page <https://www.transportation.gov/odapc/random-testing-rates> has been updated to reflect the CY 2022 random drug and alcohol testing rates.
- [Office of Drug & Alcohol Policy & Compliance | US Department of Transportation](#)
- Please note, the FRA annual random drug testing rate for Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) employees will be 25% in 2022.
- For all other DOT Agencies, the 2022 annual random testing rates will remain the same as the 2021 rates.

DOT Agency	2022 Random Drug Testing Rate	2022 Random Alcohol Testing Rate
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration [FMCSA] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The random rates did not change for 2022. • Because the random rates did not change, FMCSA is not required to publish a notice in the Federal Register. • The rate last changed in 2020. 	50%	10%
Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] 2022 Random Rate Federal Register Notice	25%	10%
Federal Railroad Administration [FRA] 2022 Random Rate Federal Register Notice	25% - Covered Service	10% - Covered Service
	25% - Maintenance of Way	10% - Maintenance of Way
Federal Transit Administration [FTA] 2022 Random Rate Federal Register Notice	50%	10%
Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration [PHMSA] 2022 Random Rate Federal Register Notice	50%	N/A

Thank you,

Matthew Marrin
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Minnesota Professional Towing Association 2022 Scholarship Application

The purpose of this scholarship program is to assist young men and women whom are seeking a higher education in order to develop advanced skills.

Three scholarships of \$500.00 each will be awarded annually to applicants who must be at least a senior in high school and/or 18-25 years of age and is a son, daughter, or member in good standing with the MPTA.

MPTA Scholarship Guidelines

- Applicant must have a 3.0 GPA to qualify.
- Applicant must provide proof of performance with application (official school transcript).
- Applicant must provide proof of enrollment for institute of higher education with application.
- Applicant must provide two letters of recommendation from either a teacher, school advisor, or extra circular advisor (i.e. sports coach, club advisor).
- Applications must be returned to MPTA by **May 20th** of each year.
- Students may apply for scholarship a maximum of three times.
- Applicants do not need to study in the automotive industry.

Selection Process:

- The MPTA Board of Directors will select scholarship winners based on the criteria below from the applications:
 - Accomplishments specified on application (i.e. DECA, FBLA, sports, leadership roles, etc.)
 - Student's goals, both long-term and short-term
 - Student's GPA
 - Student's work ethic (Does the students hold a part-time job as well as attend school?)
- The applications will be reviewed by the Board of Directors at the May Board meeting.
- Scholarship winners will be contacted in late May.
- The Association will give the checks to the students in the spring of each year.

Applications due no later than May 20th

All applications, letters of recommendations, and transcript should be sent to:

Minnesota Professional Towing Association
2886 Middle Street
Little Canada, MN 55117

Phone: 651-487-2231

Fax: 651-487-2447

Application, letters of recommendations, and transcript must be received by **May 20th** for consideration.
(Please print or type – if not enough space is provided please attach a separate sheet)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone Number (best number to reach you) _____

Name of current school _____

Name of parent or guardian _____

Name of the MPTA member with whom you are associated:

(Applicant must be the son, daughter, or member in good standing of the MPTA)

Business's Name _____

Owner's Name: _____

Name of the institute of higher education that you plan to attend:

Reason for applying (financial need): _____

List extra curricular activities: _____

Please describe any awards, honors, or leadership positions you have held/received:

Future goals (long and short term): _____

Do you currently hold a job outside of school? If so please provide name of employer:

How do you plan to use this scholarship for higher education?

Return complete application to MPTA, 2886 Middle Street, Little Canada, MN 55117

Phone: 651-487-2231

Fax: 651-487-2447

Ford Mustang Mach-E Owner Unfairly Charged \$28K in Repairs After Tow Truck Damaged EV Batteries



No one likes getting hit with an expensive repair bill for their car. It's especially frustrating when one is charged an excessive amount of money. An owner of a Ford Mustang Mach-E electric crossover SUV was justifiably frustrated when unfairly charged \$28,000 in repairs after a flatbed tow truck damaged the EV batteries.

'Pull Over Safely' dashboard notification lights up on Canadian's Mustang Mach-E

The demand for the Ford Mustang Mach-E is very high. Both longtime automotive enthusiasts and younger car buyers are eager to get the electric crossover EV. However, since EV technology is relatively new, many people don't know how to properly work with electric vehicles, including automotive technicians and tow truck operators. An owner of a Mach-E found this out the hard way.

On the *Mach-E Forum*, a Canadian owner posted about an unfortunate experience with his Mustang Mach-E, as detailed by *CarBuzz*. During a road trip to Florida, the Mustang Mach-E owner saw the "Pull Over Safely" dashboard notification light up in front of him.

After pulling the Mustang Mach-E over, the Canadian owner called Ford's Roadside Assistance. The customer service agent then dispatched a flatbed tow truck to bring the electric vehicle to the closest Ford dealership.

Flatbed tow truck damaged the EV batteries of Mustang Mach-E

In most cases, a flatbed tow truck is superior to a traditional wheel lift tow truck. It typically provides a more stable and secure connection with a car. As a result, a flatbed tow truck is generally safer. However, with the Canadian owner's Mustang Mach-E, the use of a flatbed tow truck didn't turn out so well.

The driver of the flatbed tow truck arrived at the scene. He didn't know how to properly work with an electric vehicle, though, for he "hooked a winch onto the Mach-E's battery rail and damaged the batteries." Afterward, the Mach-E owner received a \$28,000 repair bill.

Both Ford and Agero Roadside Assistance Services deny any responsibility for the Mustang Mach-E repairs

The situation goes downhill from there. First, the Mach-E owner called Ford. However, Ford refused to take any responsibility and blamed Agero Roadside Assistance Services. Agero denied the claim, though, and told the Mustang Mach-E owner that he "cannot prove it was the tow company's fault." The tow company "said the battery damage could have happened when the car was transported to Florida at an earlier date."

All of this mess leaves the Mustang Mach-E owner in an unenviable position. With a very high and unfair \$28,000 repair bill, "both Ford and Agero are denying any responsibility." However, as *CarBuzz* rightly notes, "it's really Agero's fault for contracting with an improperly trained tow truck company."

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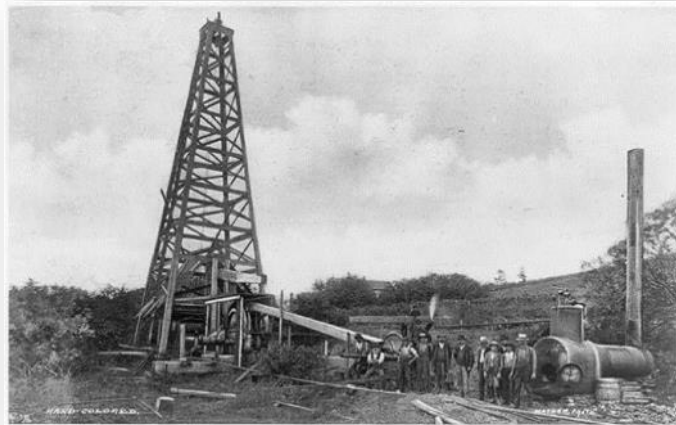
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The woes of the Canadian Mustang Mach-E owner get even worse, for his insurance company denied the claim as well. With the \$28K repair bill, the only recourse might be to sue both the tow company and Ford. The Mustang Mach-E owner is currently “seeking lawyers in both the United States and Canada.”

While the tow company is the entity most responsible for the damage to the EV batteries, Ford bears some responsibility as well. The owner followed what Ford’s Roadside Assistance program told him to do. Furthermore, given that electric vehicles feature new technologies, including EV batteries, Ford needs to do a better job at ensuring that the tow companies they utilize are adequately trained with how to work with EVs.

MPTA currently working on additional training information for towing and recovery of EV’s. This is becoming more of an issue as more EV’s make their way to our Roadways.

If the United States drilled for its own oil, would it possibly have enough to last for a few hundred years especially in Alaska?



The United States does “drill for its own oil”, questioner and it has for nearly 150 years. It actually started doing so around Titusville, Pennsylvania, although it mainly extracts natural gas from that area these days:

The known resources in the United States (including oil shales) are between 50–75 years worth. It’s possible that deposits off of Florida and perhaps those in the ANWR (Alaskan Natural Wildlife Reserve) could add a few more years; however, there is no political will to tap those locations at this time.

We actually do drill our own oil. The US produces about 18% of the oil produced globally, and accounts for about 18% of oil consumed globally. This means we’re essentially oil-independent and we have been for years now. And Biden is increasing our domestic production and is on track to issue more domestic oil and gas drilling permits this year than issued in any year under Trump.

People fail to understand is that oil is a global commodity so it’s price is determined by global supply and demand. Yes, the U.S. produces enough oil to meet our own needs, but when the global supply is low, then all oil goes up in value. Producers are capitalists who will sell it wherever they can get the best price.

It would be very difficult for the U.S. to increase production enough to affect global fuel prices since the U.S. accounts for a relatively small portion of the global market. OPEC on the other hand accounts for about 40% of global oil production and about 60% of the oil that is traded internationally. So when they raise or lower production, the U.S. feels it here even if the U.S. theoretically has enough to last for centuries—and it does.

DRIVER DRUG VIOLATIONS INCREASED BY 10% In 2021 OVER PRIOR YEAR

Transport Topics
FEBRUARY 9, 2022



The total number of truck driver drug violations increased by 10% in 2021, compared with total numbers reported in 2020, according to a new federal Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse summary report.

The new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration report said the number of driver drug violations in all of 2021 totaled 58,215, compared with 52,810 in 2020, when the Clearinghouse first went into effect on Jan. 6 .

Those numbers include drug test failures, disqualifications resulting from carrier knowledge of a driver's drug use and refusals by drivers to take a drug test, the report said.

However, positive drug tests accounted for the overwhelming majority of drug violations, rising in 2021 to 55,223, from 53,557 the prior year. By far, the largest number of positive driver test results were for marijuana, which increased to 31,085 in 2021, up from 29,511 the prior year. Positive marijuana test results totaled more than 55% of all driver drug test failures.

The number of positive cocaine test results also increased, to 8,765 for all of 2021, from 7,940 the prior year. Positive drug test numbers slightly declined for 11 of 12 other drug test categories.

The report numbers continued to raise concerns about the large number of drivers who, after being disqualified to drive after drug violations, did not enroll in the agency's return-to-work program and pass a subsequent drug re-test to get back behind the wheel.

As of Jan. 1, 104,840 drivers had at least one drug or alcohol violation, but of that number only 23,788 CDL and CLP holders were in not-prohibited from driving status after passing return-to-duty tests. By the end of 2021, 61,084 drivers had not started the return-to-duty process, according to the monthly report.

Just over 81,000 drivers remain in "prohibited driving status" after receiving drug violations. Such large numbers have had some officials concerned that some drivers may be changing careers, further exacerbating the already troubling driver shortage.

"American Trucking Associations has been monitoring the monthly reporting data, specifically, data related to drivers completing the return-to-duty process," said Dan Horvath, ATA's vice president of safety policy. "We are engaged with FMCSA on these numbers, including the potential for a deeper dive into what may be happening to this group of drivers who do not complete the RTD process."

"We are also working with ATA's Controlled Substances, Driver Health & Wellness Subcommittee on furthering outreach and education to the driving community regarding the consequences of having a positive test," Horvath added.

FMCSA did not respond to a request for comment at press time.

As of the end of 2021, 2.6 million drivers, 299,000 employers and 133,000 owner-operators have registered on the Clearinghouse website. During that same period, 10.7 million queries have been made by employers. Of that total, 3.45 million employer queries were made for pre-employment check.

Last year, federal regulators announced plans to crack down on state driver licensing agencies, requiring that they keep a closer watch for commercial motor vehicle drivers with drug or alcohol violations, and removing their driving privileges within 60 days after being notified of a test failure.

The Clearinghouse is an online repository of data that carriers, state driver licensing agencies and law enforcement officials will be able to use to check a commercial driver license holder's drug and alcohol violations.

The Clearinghouse rule requires drivers to register and consent to carriers checking their record for failed drug tests or refusals to take drug tests. Employers are required to check the Clearinghouse as part of pre-employment driver investigations and screen each of their currently employed CDL drivers at least once a year.

Cummins to Build Engines for Low-Carbon Fuels

Cummins Inc. announced it will build a new family of internal combustion engines for a range of low-carbon fuels beginning in 2024 using core components on common engine blocks, with additional components installed to handle the specific fuel.



The common platforms would all be fuel agnostic, not flex-fuel capable.

These engines are intended to be transition technologies to address climate change, which the company called the No. 1 existential crisis of this generation, and in light of battery-electric powertrains that work for some applications but don't function right now across the board.

"We can't wait for the perfect solution," said Srikanth Padmanabhan, president of Cummins' engine business.

"We have said by 2050 Cummins will be net zero, which means between now and then I think there will be a variety of technologies that our customers need and we will be there to deliver all of those in terms of diesel, [compressed and liquefied] natural gas, hydrogen, propane and gasoline [all are fuels which can be adopted now without the need for incentives], as well as in terms of [eventual] hydrogen production, as well as battery-electric and fuel cell electric," Padmanabhan said.

Cummins reported the new engine-building approach during a virtual press conference Feb. 14. It forecast greater demand for engines running on low-carbon fuel will encourage the development of the necessary new fueling infrastructure, but the company is not investing in a network of public infrastructure itself, and called for a significant government effort to accomplish that.

"The upfront cost of these engines will be much lower than moving to fully electric or fuel cell electric options. That is critical for lowering the barrier to entry for fleets looking to adopt emissions-reducing technologies today," said Amy Boerger, vice president of Cummins' North American engine business.

Columbus, Ind.-based Cummins in 2021 in North America supplied the largest share of Class 8 engines under 10 liters, a segment it dominates, and supplied the second-highest number of Class 8 engines 10 liters and greater, according to Wards Intelligence. The leading supplier of the heavier Class 8 engines is Detroit, a brand of Daimler Truck North America, although all truck makers have their own proprietary engines.

The new approach at Cummins will be applied across the company's B-, L- and X-series engine portfolios, and Cummins noted 80% of the parts will be familiar to both fleet technicians and production workers at truck plants. It is emphasizing the cost-savings of parts commonality and convenience of one source of contact for the variety of engine options.

Below the head gasket, each engine will largely have similar components and above the head gasket will have different components for different fuel types. The diesel engines will continue to use compression ignition. The other engines will be spark ignited and intended to have diesel-like performance.

"We want to do something where the customer makes money; where at the end of the day it works for their business. So this idea of being practical, feasible and available is really, really important," said Brett Merritt, vice president of Cummins' engine business. "We have customers today where today battery-electric is the right answer. It just doesn't work across the board in all things. So stay tuned for a variety of engine announcements and OEM announcements that will support this message."

Jonathon White, vice president of engineering at the Cummins engine business added: "To be able to pull forward technologies faster as part of this platform portfolio, it's just so exciting."

Padmanabhan said in his 30 years in the industry he has not once seen "that there is a company that actually has done a fuel-agnostic platform. They've talked about it, been in the research labs. But we are actually bringing it to production."



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Analyst: Expect fuel prices to shoot up in wake of Russian invasion of Ukraine

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Expect to keep seeing rising prices at the pump following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Although the U.S. is still the world's largest oil producer, it's producing 1 million barrels per day short of pre-COVID numbers, Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis with GasBuddy said during an update on prices on Facebook. He said that shortages of fracking sand and steel are also impacting gas production.

"The price of oil took a big jump up today, which is hardly unexpected," De Haan said. "Earlier this morning the price of oil had jumped up by almost 8%. By the end of the day, it had faded down to about a \$2 per barrel increase."

The average cost per gallon of diesel fuel in the U.S. on Monday was \$3.530 per gallon, an increase of .043 cents from the week before, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Russia invaded the Ukraine earlier this week in a bid to take over the country.

De Haan said that because of the invasion, gasoline was up by 16 cents per gallon at the beginning of the day but closed the day in many areas up about 8-10 cents per gallon.

"Right now, gas stations are raising their prices to reflect the increase in cost," De Haan said. "The increase is likely to play out over the course of the next several days."

He said that prices could rise 5-15 cents per gallon over the next one-two weeks.

"The primary risk in this situation is Russia's oil flow," De Haan said. "It is the 2nd largest oil producer globally. What happens in Russia will have a profound impact on energy availability and price."

He said the primary impact will be on Americans' wallets.

"The national average has the potential to eventually rise to \$4 gallon," De Haan said. "The national average stands at \$3.55 per gallon."

How will Russia's invasion impact prices?

De Haan said things are likely to escalate, which will set off a chain of events that could result in potential disruption of Russia's oil flow.

"It's possible that Russia could use oil as a weapon," De Haan said. "Russia has already used natural gas as a weapon."

He said that gasoline prices in the future will likely be above GasBuddy's 2022 forecast that was released in December 2021.

"The Russia situation will likely push prices higher than we had initially expected," De Haan said. "GasBuddy had forecasted the national average to be \$3.41 per gallon. GasBuddy's forecast may need to be revised in light of the situation."

The highest average price as far as regions for diesel fuel is \$4.233 per gallon on the West Coast, according to the EIA. The lowest prices are on the Gulf Coast where they are \$3.237 per gallon.

He said traditionally low-cost states like Arkansas, Alabama and Texas may not even hit the \$4 average.

He said wholesale racks where tanker trucks fill up are already seeing an adjustment in prices. He said that by the end of the day, the racks will have a higher price than they did when the day started. He said that means stations will be paying higher prices and in turn consumers will pay more too.

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“The Russian situation is not the only factor pushing prices up,” De Haan said. “Motorists across the country are starting to see the switch to summer gasoline. Not only that, but demand is likely to rebound as temperatures warm up.

He said that those factors combined with refinery maintenance is likely to push up prices as high as \$4 as we move forward, likely in April.

The previous high national average price record was \$4.10 per gallon in 2008. He said it’s possible that prices could breach that record in May or June.

He said the average in California has already hit \$5 per gallon but is unlikely to rise high as \$6 per gallon. He added that most Americans are unlikely to be seeing the national average hit \$5 and most Americans won’t be paying that amount on the pump.

He said it is possible that President Joe Biden could tap the national strategic reserve.

“It’s not yet known when we’ll see an organized drop at the pump,” De Haan said. “If the situation improves in Russia dramatically, we could see prices go down relatively quickly.”

He said oil prices could plummet with any positive development.

He said that there is the potential that the U.S. could sign a new nuclear agreement with Iran. He said Iran produces 2 million barrels a day and that could potentially offset what’s going on with Russia.

“Beyond that I don’t see a decline in prices until later this summer or fall,” De Haas said.

He said to lower prices right now, it’d take a decrease in global demand and an increase in global supply.

“Both of those appear somewhat unlikely at this point,” De Haas said. “For now, Americans will have to dig deeper.”

Fun Facts about March

- March is the 3rd month of the year and has 31 days.
- It is the first month of Spring which begins between March 19-21.
- In the Southern Hemisphere, March is the same as September in the Northern Hemisphere.
- Each year March and June end on the same day of the week.
- It is the time of year when animals start to wake up from hibernation. March Madness is a basketball tournament played by the NCAA.
- Easter is sometimes celebrated in March.
- The name March comes from the Roman god of war, Mars. For many years, March, being the start of spring, was also the start of the New Year. Much of Europe used March as the start of the year. Britain used March 25th as the beginning of the New Year until 1752.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

MPTA Board Meeting

March 8, 2022
6:00 p.m, Dinner
6:30 p.m. Meeting

MPTA Office
2886 Middle Street
Little Canada, MN 55117

Check Facebook for zoom video conference information

MPTA Board Meeting

April 19, 2022
6:00 p.m, Dinner
6:30 p.m. Meeting

MPTA Office
2886 Middle Street
Little Canada, MN 55117

Check Facebook for zoom video conference information

Save The Date - 2022 Tow Shows



- **March 8-10 • TRAA's Legislative Action Workshop • Washington, DC**
- **April 21-23 • Florida Tow Show • Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace**
- **May 20-22 • New Hampshire Tow Show • Hampton Beach State Park**
- **June 3-5 • ESTRA Tow Show • Lake George, NY**
- **June 17-19 • Wisconsin Towing Association Tow Show • Chula Vista Resort**
- **June 16-18 • TowXpo Fort Worth • Fort Worth Convention Center**
- **July 20-23 • Towman Games • Huntington Convention Center in Cleveland**
- **August 26-27 • Pacific Northwest Tow Fest • Northern Quest Resort & Casino, WA**
- **Sept. 16-17 • Towing & Recovery Prof.of NC Tow Show • Hickory Convention Center**
- **September 21-23 • AT ShowPlace • Westgate Las Vegas Hotel & Events Center**
- **September 22-25 • Midwest Regional Tow Show • Great Wolf Lodge**
- **October 6-8 • Tennessee Tow Show • Chattanooga Convention Center**
- **Oct 7-9 • International Towing Museum Weekend and Hall of Fame Induction • TN**
- **November 17-19 • American Towman Exposition • Baltimore Convention Center**