

## Congressman Proposes Relief at the Pump

By Gretchen Ross  
13 News

ROCKFORD - As drivers take a hit to the wallet when they gas their cars, one Illinois Congressman says he has a plan to bring some relief. But a local economist says the best way to save money lies not with lawmakers but with you.

Congressman Don Manzullo wants to temporarily cut the state and federal gas tax for Illinois drivers, saving them an extra 60 cents per gallon. But some say that plan could backfire.

Rockford College Economic Professor Dr. Bob Von der Ohe tells 13 News, "If we really want to conserve, we do what the Europeans have done, which is simply raise the price of gasoline with taxation. That will set a floor that the gasoline prices will not fall below that particular level. That would provide significant incentives for consumers to move to the more fuel efficient cars."

Manzullo's plan calls for a switch from costly foreign oil to alternative renewable energy like corn-based ethanol. He says, "It's brought down the price of gas by 15 percent, and that's about 60 cents on four dollar gas. But there are other additives that should be used such as switch grass."

But a spokesperson for Robert Abboud, Manzullo's November opponent, says he leans more towards hybrids. Abboud's communications director Micheal Carroll says, "Invest tax incentives in hybrid technology to expedite the process to make that technology both affordable and widely available, that we can start to begin to eliminate that first 35 miles of driving."

But, in the end Von der Ohe thinks high prices ultimately will drive consumers. He says, "It's taking the incentive away from the consumers to continue driving as if there is a constant source of relatively inexpensive energy."

Experts say one way to save money on gas, is to drive at slower speeds preserving the amount you use.

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