



Hypothetical Joneses feel pain of proposed gas tax hike

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BOISE -- Catholic Charities of Idaho is urging state lawmakers not to increase the state's 25-cent-a-gallon gas tax to help pay for road and transportation improvements.

The group charted the driving habits of a hypothetical Idaho family to show how it says an increase would hurt real people.

Meet the Joneses: Mom and Dad Jones -- both have jobs -- and their two school age children.

These Joneses, who are near the poverty line, are having a hard time keeping up and Catholic Charities says increasing the state gas tax will only make things harder.

"The gas tax will erode their spending power, which will erode their buying power so they'll have to make bad choices about what to sacrifice," says Will Rainford, legislative advocate for Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities figures Mom and Dad Jones share a car that averages 25 miles per gallon. Between work, after school activities -- and all that jazz -- they drive 30 miles a day or 11,000 miles a year.

Rainford says that adds up to 438 gallons of gas a year. And if the gas tax is increased by 10 cents to 35 cents a gallon, as Gov. Butch Otter proposes, that'll cost the Jones \$153 a year.

Catholic Charities says that amounts to a month's worth of home heating or 70 gallons of milk.

And while these Joneses are a hypothetical family, Catholic Charities says the struggle to make ends meet is all too real for most Idahoans.

"One paycheck away from being broke or homeless is not a myth," says Rainford. "It happens."

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