

Business groups defend gas-tax indexing with big money to defeat Question 1

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Some of Massachusetts' leading business groups are chipping in big-time to preserve a provision that would raise the gas tax annually by the rate of inflation, a measure that is being challenged in Question 1 on the Nov. 4 ballot.

In the latest filing on the Massachusetts Office of Political and Campaign Finance, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation and A Better City, all business membership groups, contributed to defeat the ballot question. The Chamber's total donations this year are \$45,000; the MTF has donated \$10,000; and A Better City, which advocates for transportation investment, has reached \$55,000 this year. Other business groups chipping in to the No on One Committee include Associated Industries of Massachusetts (\$5,000), the Massachusetts Business Roundtable (\$7,500), the Massachusetts Hospital Association (\$5,000), and NAIOP Massachusetts (\$4,768).

The gasoline tax was increased — for the first time since 1991 — from 21 to 24 cents in 2013 as part of a \$500 million transportation package passed by the Legislature; the three-cent increase accounts for over \$100 million in additional revenue per year. The 24-cent tax would increase every year by the Consumer Price Index increase, a provision that is seen by advocates as critical to direct additional funding toward road and bridge repairs in the commonwealth.

But a petition drive by Committee to Tank the Automatic Gas Tax Hikes aims to stop the gas-tax CPI provision in its tracks. Unlike the No on One Committee, it has no big money backers. It has raised about \$80,000 this year, and reported having \$16,000 in the bank in the latest filing period.

In contrast, the No on One Committee has raised almost \$1.7 million this year, and reported a balance of over \$1 million in the last reporting period. Aside from the business groups, and heavy contributions from various trade unions, the contributions to the No on One Committee read like a who's who of construction, real estate development and engineering firms. Contributors include:

- Suffolk Construction (\$100,000)
- National Development (\$10,000)
- [Boston Properties](#) (\$10,000)
- The Bullfinch Companies (\$10,000)
- Aggregate Industries (\$11,500)
- **Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, Inc.**(\$25,000)
- **Jay Cashman Inc** (\$5,750)
- **Parsons Brinckerhoff** (\$5,000)

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