



[Dems leave door open for gas tax hike](#)

By [Jason Hancock](#) 1/29/09 4:03 PM

A day after Gov. Chet Culver [voiced his opposition to any tax increases](#) to help solve Iowa's budget problems, Democratic legislative leaders said they have not given up on the idea of increasing the state's gasoline tax.

Culver said raising the gas tax during a recession would not be "a prudent thing to do" but stopped short of committing to veto an increase. He said, "If 150 legislators want to keep talking about it, they have that right."

"[Culver] hasn't said 'no' in my presence," said Senate President Jack Kibbie, D-Emmetsburg, Thursday morning. Kibbie [argued for a gas tax increase](#) during his opening remarks to the legislature.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy said legislators think that based on Culver's public statements there is a willingness to listen to the legislature on this issue.

House Speaker Pat Murphy, D-Dubuque, said it would be closer to the end of the session before legislators tackle the issue.

The gas tax issue seems to be driven by a feeling that the next Revenue Estimating Conference, which will take place in March, bring more bad economic news. Most believe revenues will be down further than expected, which would mean more spending cuts on top of those already proposed by Culver or increased taxes.

Supporters say truckers driving along the state's interstate system would pay the majority of a gas tax increase.