

Legislative Report for MAT
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Governor Jennifer Granholm supports changing the state gasoline tax to raise more money as gas prices rise. Granholm has commented that the state's current 19 cent per gallon tax does not raise enough money to repair Michigan's aging roads. "The roads are the pits. We have no long term funding source to make sure the roads are smooth," she said. The Transportation Funding Task Force that Granholm appointed last year has suggested converting the per gallon gasoline tax to a tax on the wholesale price of gas and raising vehicle registration fees. Granholm supports both. If the change takes effect, motorists would pay more in taxes as the price of gas goes up, but less if the price drops, says Granholm.

Cara Boucher, a 25 year employee of the DNR, has been named Assistant Chief of the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division. Boucher also will serve as State Forester for the DNR. Boucher holds bachelor's degrees in Forestry and Communications from Michigan State University and a master's degree in Administration from Central Michigan University. She is a Michigan Registered Forester and a Society of American Foresters Certified Forester. She began working for the DNR in 1984 as a forester and has worked in urban and community forestry; private forest, cooperative and state forest management programs, overseeing a broad range of forest management activities.

Governor Graham has appointed Agriculture Commissioner Ann Jousma-Miller as director of her northern Michigan office. Jousma-Miller started the new post in April. Jousma-Miller has served as executive director of the Delta County Economic Development Alliance and had also served as Michigan Farm Bureau regional representative for the Upper Peninsula as the special liaison to the Upper Peninsula to former House Speaker Curtis Hertel.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of Natural Resources continues to struggle with finalizing the 2009-10 budget. An amendment has been added to HB 4446 to include cord mandate language. This year's effort includes language to require the DNR to prepare additional acres if it appears that regional market demand requires increased volume of harvested timber. Wording to require the DNR provide the House and Senate Appropriations DNR Subcommittees with quarterly reports on the number of acres treated is also include in the bill.