

《北京热议：交通拥堵税究竟该不该交》

导读:近期，为缓解市内交通，减少驾驶司机在城市交通繁忙地段驾驶的频率，政府部门就征收交通拥堵税这项提议展开了持续讨论。与此同时，人们对于是否应该上交交通拥堵税这个话题也展开了热议。



Beijing's traffic is notorious.

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With millions of vehicles filling the city's roads on a daily basis, it's not uncommon for drivers during peak hours to find themselves measuring their travelling distance in meters, rather than kilometers.

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To try to help ease this, municipal authorities are now actively discussing the idea of a congestion tax.

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The proposal would hit drivers with a yet-unspecified surcharge to travel into Beijing's high-traffic areas.

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It's a concept which - for most people who work in Beijing's busy downtown area - isn't sitting well with daily commuters.

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"To collect congestion fees may be effective to a certain degree. But you can't sort out Beijing's traffic problems by such short-term measures. It may be that you have to change the way the nation's capital works."

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The municipal government is in the process of moving most of its offices into the suburbs, which should ease traffic in central Beijing, where most municipal government offices are currently located.

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A number of other steps have also been taken, including increasing parking fees and implementing restrictions on when people can drive, based on their license plate number.

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Ma Zhong, professor of Environmental Studies at Renmin University, says while well-intentioned, the license-plate restrictions have had the opposite effect.

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"Those policies may have intended to control the number of vehicles. But they ended up just doing the opposite, because as a result of the controls, there was a further stimulation of vehicle purchases."

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As such, if people can afford a 2nd vehicle to get around license plate restrictions, its left many questioning whether a congestion tax will be enough to dissuade drivers.

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Zheng Wentao, associate professor of Earth and Space Sciences with Peking University, says he believes the core issue in eliminating traffic congestion in Beijing is to fix the layout of the roads.

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"The problem of traffic jams are best resolved if the roads themselves are well designed. It's not difficult to figure out where the problem areas are and what are the main factors behind the traffic jams."

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However, that too becomes problematic, as many of the core areas in central Beijing can't be torn up or redrawn, given the existing development, as well as the many historical sites which can't be moved.

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Many who are discussing the proposed congestion tax online say the issue goes beyond restricting vehicles or charging people more.

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Much of the debate focuses on ways to ensure drivers follow the rules of the road, which many experts say would certainly go a long way in eliminating Beijing's incessant gridlock.

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