

Addressing Challenges to Effective Public and Stakeholder Communication on RUC

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“If you’re explaining, you’re losing.”

RUC is:

- Means for realizing user pays principle
- Replacement for traditional gas tax
- Tool for smoothing inequities among different road users and vehicles

RUC is not:

- Additional tax on top of gas tax/fees
- Traditional tolling

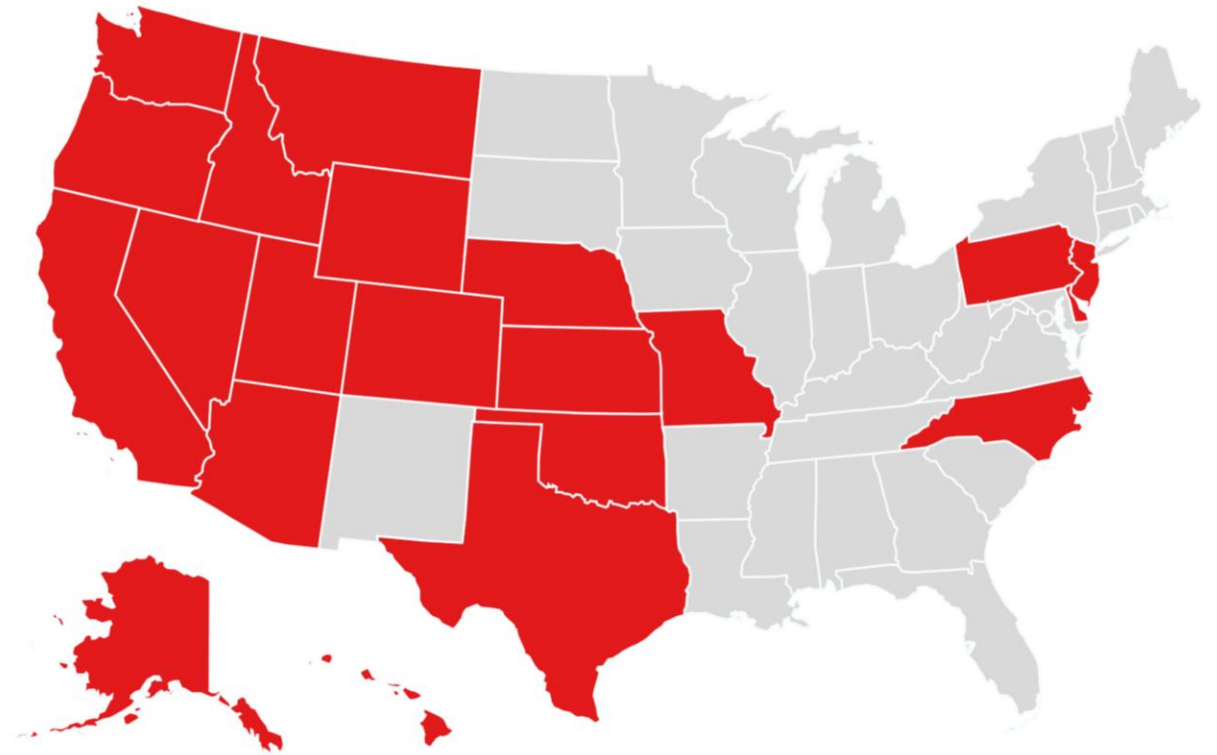
Perceptions nationwide that “rural drivers will be punished by a RUC”

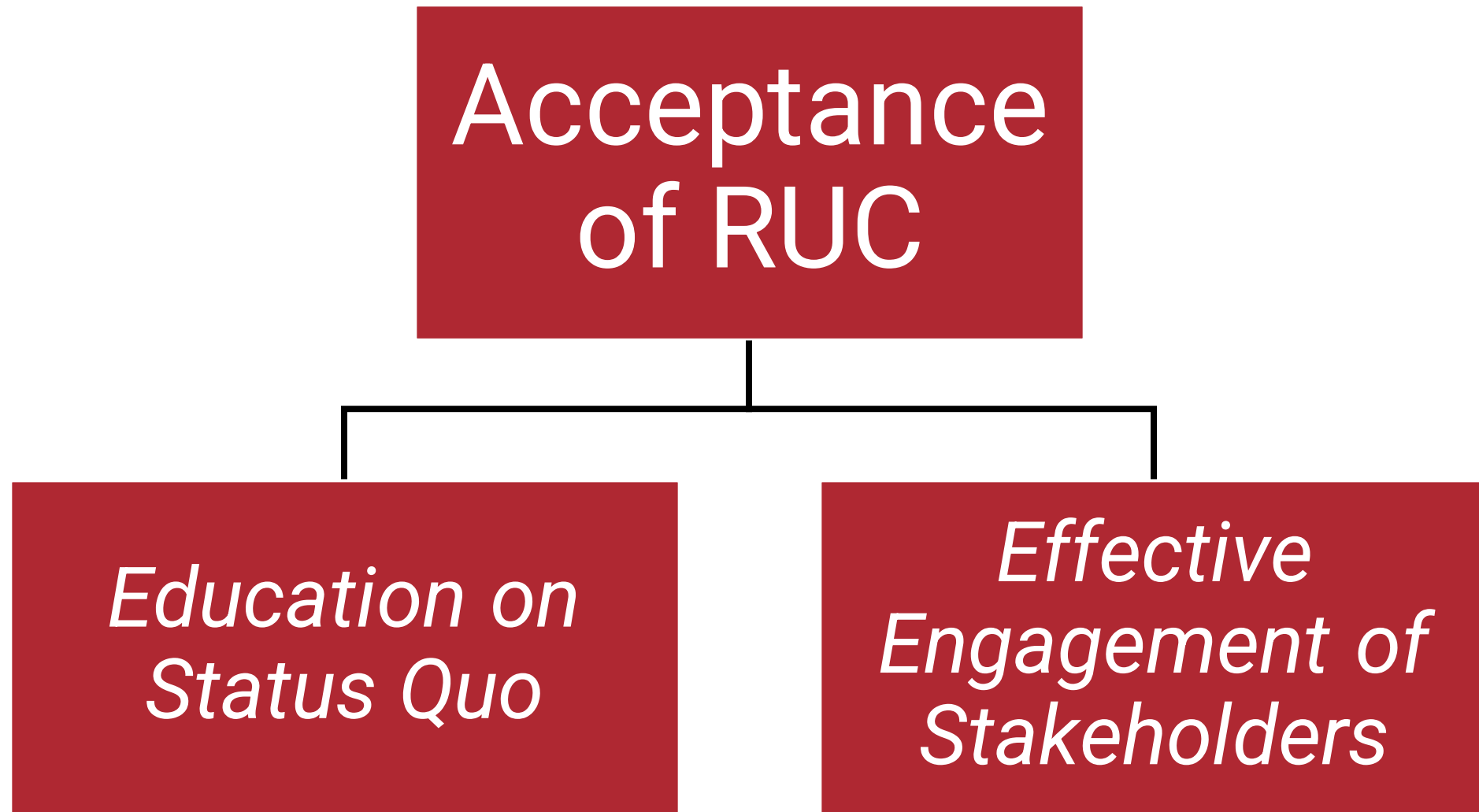
- Reality: Rural drivers pay more gas tax by driving older, less efficient vehicles

Conflating of RUC, gas tax, and tolling adds to negative perceptions among public and stakeholders

- Most think a RUC will be additive, rather than a replacement of existing taxes & fees

We’ve worked in 20 states to bring data to bear to dispel these to be widespread beliefs







Improve Education on the Status Quo

- Address lack of understanding of how roads are currently financed and funded
 - Why a gas tax? Where does this revenue go?
 - How does maintenance get funded?
- Explain why gas tax is increasingly inadequate to meet our needs
 - Do gas tax revenues provide enough to manage our roads?
 - What happens when gas tax revenues are not enough for needs?

We need clear and compelling messaging to help create a wider and stronger sense of urgency on the need for transition to RUC

Effective Engagement of Stakeholders

- Partner agencies
 - Tax collection agencies
 - Motor Vehicle agencies
 - Non-highway programs and existing financial relationships
 - Non-transportation agencies that might get revenue transfers
- Lawmakers
 - Address funding uncertainty concerns
- Commercial vehicle stakeholders
- Households
 - Key Segments:
 - Rural Drivers
 - Low Income Drivers

Broadening the spectrum of stakeholders who care about RUC enables a wider span of impact as they help carry the message to their constituents and “influencers”





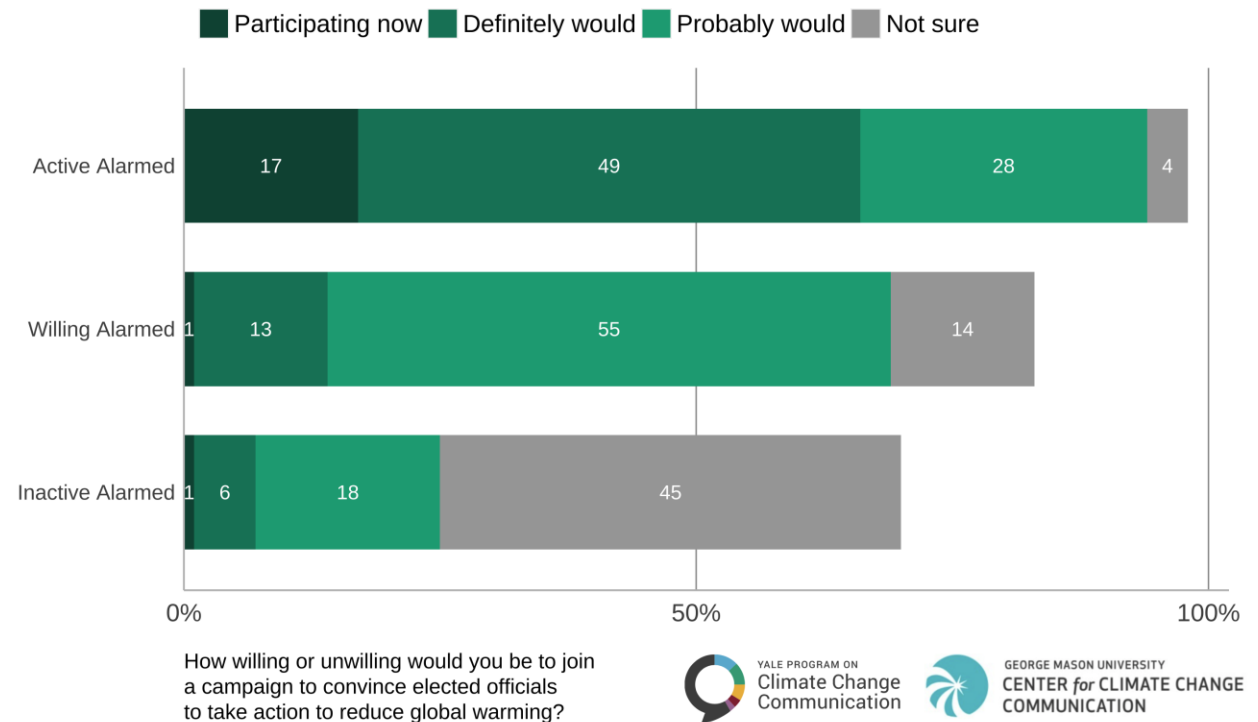
Stakeholder segmentation is a tool for optimizing outreach, engagement, and education

Latent class analysis could help us more fully understand the range of RUC perceptions and how to most effectively address them

Source: <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/about/projects/global-warmings-six-americas/>

Understanding the correlations of stakeholder perceptions and knowledge with RUC policy and program objectives could facilitate more effective and expeditious education and implementation

Majority of the Active Alarmed would definitely join, or are already participating in a campaign to convince elected officials to take action to reduce global warming



Source: <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/segmenting-the-climate-change-alarmed-active-willing-and-inactive/>

- Understanding and acceptance of RUC not growing as fast as need for gas tax replacement
- Incorrect perceptions and factual misunderstandings persist nationwide
- Need for compelling message(s) to create sense of urgency for transitioning to RUC system
- Need to cast a wider net to engage and educate more and different stakeholders
- Engage non-DOT stakeholders to help carry the flag for RUC implementation
- More precisely target RUC communication to specific audiences to improve messaging effectiveness



Thank You

