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**Gas Station Owners and Employees
Attend Budget Hearing in Opposition of Oil Tax**
Attendees send message to JFC members: "I'm not big oil!"

Sparta, Wis (March 23, 2009)—Highlighting the extra costs for consumers and other negative side effects of the oil tax in the Governor's budget proposal, local gas retailers attended the Joint Committee on Finance hearing today and voiced their opposition to this flawed plan. Retailers reminded legislators that if passed, the proposal would cost consumers more than alternative plans and would hurt businesses at a time when they are already struggling to protect Wisconsin jobs.

Proponents of the oil tax have dubbed the proposal a fee on the profits of "big oil." However, the proposal taxes gross revenue on the sale of motor fuel in Wisconsin and many observers agree that consumers will bear the cost. Attendees—wearing red t-shirts stating, "I'M NOT BIG OIL!"—testified that the oil tax will not hurt big oil and will actually be a hidden tax on Wisconsin families. Unlike alternative revenue sources, they argue, the oil tax will go up as the cost of gas goes up—leaving families to struggle even more to keep gas in the tank.

Retailers testified that they survive on razor thin margins as it is, and will not be able to absorb the higher premiums on the purchase price of gasoline. Julie Yahnke, owner of the Holmen Quik Stop and chairperson of the WPMCA's Government Affairs Committee stated, "Wisconsin businesses will lose money, some will shut down and workers will suffer. Our communities can't afford to lose any more jobs. No matter what they're calling it in the budget, it's a hidden gas tax that will be passed on to consumers."

Gas retailers understand the need for a stable funding source to maintain Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure, and testified that a better option exists—one that doesn't have the unintended consequences of distorting the fuel supply market and hurting the retailers and the thousands of people who work for them.

WPMCA represents over 2,000 independent petroleum marketers, convenience store owners, truck stop and travel plaza operators, automotive oil change outlets and other automotive service providers throughout Wisconsin. These companies sell over 80 percent of the motor fuel and nearly all the farm fuel and heating oil sold in Wisconsin. For more information, go to www.wpmca.org.