

## We should raise the cost of driving

With the development of science and technology and economy in China, there are more and more private cars on the road, which causes a series of environmental and traffic problems. I think it is necessary for China to implement measures to control the private cars on the road. One of the most useful ways is to raise the cost of driving.

According to the data from the Ministry of Public Security of China, car ownership in China had increased from 137 million to 260 million from 2013 to 2019, which almost doubled. With this astonishing growth have come many problems such as air pollution and traffic congestion. According to a survey in China Population Resources and Environment, motor vehicle exhaust has contributed 74% of hydrocarbons, 63% of CO, 37% of NO<sub>2</sub>, as well as more than 20% of suspended matter particles, to the air pollution in China's major cities. Frankly speaking, automobile exhaust is one of the leading causes of air pollution. Also, too many private cars on the road are beyond the capacity of the roads, which causes traffic congestion and traffic accidents. To alleviate these problems, we should raise the cost of driving to control the number of private cars. When it comes to raising costs, I'm not talking about the cost of buying cars, but driving cars. We can take some soft measures like raising the parking fee, congestion charges and so on.

On one hand, raising the cost of driving can reduce pollution. It is a simple truth that raising the cost of driving can reduce the frequency people drive. Taking water for instance, as a precious resource, the price of water is so low that people use it freely. But when we raise its price to \$10 per m<sup>3</sup>, most people will start to cherish water resources. If we raise the price of driving, most people will start thinking whether driving is more cost-effective than other forms of transportation. If people drive less, then automobile exhaust will be reduced, air pollution and traffic congestion will be alleviated.

Taking Singapore as an example, Singapore has implemented a car ownership license system called COE (Certificate of Entitlement) to control the growth rate of the number of cars and it worked. Before people can drive on the road, they have to pay a high price to buy a COE. According to Land Transport Authority of Singapore, before 2009, the number of cars in Singapore was growing at about 3% a year. After implementing the measure, the annual growth rate is around 0.25 percent from February 2015 to January 2018. And it effectively alleviated traffic congestion and air pollution.

On the other hand, raising the cost of driving can help save resources. According to the data from Prospective Economic Research Institute, cars currently account for about a third of China's total oil consumption, and that figure is expected to rise to 57 percent by 2020. As we all know, oil is a non-renewable energy source. At this rate of oil consumption, the oil will run out in 200-300 years. What's more, the process of a car also consumes a lot of petroleum and coal resources. Nowadays, many people buy a car out of vanity, which wastes a lot of resources. By raising the cost of driving, people will consider more carefully if they really need to buy a car.

Some people may argue that this policy will hurt the interests of some car owners, who will have to spend more on cars. However, compared to what benefit this policy will bring to the environment, the personal interests of some car owners are negligible. If we drive cars without restraint, many resources such as oil will be wasted, and the air will be excessively polluted. It may be convenient for us now, but what we leave for our future generations is exhausted resources and nasty air. The convenience we get now comes at the cost of the capital for the survival and

development of future generations.

Furthermore, some people think that the government has no power to interfere with the way people travel. However, it is not an interference, but a restraint. People can still choose their way to travel freely. But by raising the cost of driving, people will choose the way within their capacity. What the policy wants to do is to make people think more about whether driving is the best way to travel. Sometimes taking public transport is more convenient and practical.

However, raising the cost of driving is the roughest and the most direct way to solve the environment problem and traffic problem. To make people more willing to try other public transportation than cars, we should improve our public transportation system. In this way, we can provide the citizens with a more convenient and low-carbon way of travel. The most fundamental way is to strengthen people's awareness of environmental protection and call on everyone to lead an environmentally friendly and resource-conserving life.

In conclusion, by raising the cost of driving, we can limit the number of cars, thus solve the environment problem and help improve the environment and achieve sustainable development. We should all keep in mind that there is only one earth and we should try our best to protect it.