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The market penetration of more efficient vehicles needs to be accelerated by regulatory measures. One example of such a measure is Switzerland's heavy-vehicle fee, which is levied on lorries of more 3.5 tonnes and calculated on distance driven, weight and vehicle emissions standards.

Its purpose is to internalize external costs of transport, to reduce pollution, particularly in mountain valleys, and to promote modal shift for freight transport from road to rail.

The levy was introduced in 2001 and endorsed in a popular vote by a 57% majority.

How could the introduction of a new levy win popular support?

Because its goals were clearly defined: i.e. the bulk of revenues – which reached 850 M Euro in 2005 – is allocated to infrastructure construction to achieve modal shift, including two trans-Alpine tunnels.

The haulage industry was given time to adapt to the levy, whose rate was gradually increased. The industry adapted by renewing its fleet with the most efficient vehicles and introducing logistical software to optimize vehicle routing.

The results after 5 years are:

- Freight mileage in Switzerland was curbed 8%, after years of continuous traffic growth, whilst the volume of transported freight continued to increase. This trend reversal is unique. This proves that more goods can be transported more efficiently with more efficient vehicles driving less mileage.
- With the completion of major rail infrastructure in the years to come, the modal shift is expected to accelerate from currently 39% of goods transported by rail to 47%.
- There has been no deviation of transit traffic through neighboring countries.
- Switzerland takes pride in the fact that several European have emulated or are planning to emulate this system.