



Connecticut Commuter Rail Council Resolution on Tolls 2019-001

The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council has discussed the concept of tolling as an organization. We have reached a consensus to support the implementation of tolling in CT. We feel that this method of tolling would provide needed revenue, as well as addressing the issues of:

- 1 Congestion on our major highways
- 2 Health & environment
- 3 Infrastructure
- 4 Mass Transit
- 5 Economic development / Transit-oriented development
- 6 Retention of our young people

The concept of congestion tolling addresses critical issues facing Connecticut and its economy. We lose billions of dollars a year in lost productivity as workers sit on our highways trying to get to their jobs or business appointments, as well as lost family time spent in traffic instead of at home. In addition, the fuel wasted in this congestion, and the impact that it has on public health and the environment cannot be overlooked. These are quality-of-life issues which are impacting the air we breathe and our water supply.

In a report released on October 30, 2018 by the CT Society of Engineers, grading Connecticut infrastructure on the 5 categories of bridges, drinking water, rail, roads and waste water, we received an overall C-, with our lowest rating of D+ for our roads and waste water. Additionally, the impact car emissions have had on air quality has led Connecticut to rank as having one of the highest rates of asthma in the country.

The concept of congestion tolling deals with charging higher tolls at certain times of the day, with the ability to pay more for designated high-speed lanes. This would generate needed revenue, with a high percentage

of out-of-state drivers contributing, while easing congestion at critical times of the work week. This concept has been used in Orange County, California, to address one of the highest rates of congestion and emissions in the country. It has proven to be very successful – in both generating revenue and improving air quality.

As a Council, we know that under Federal law, the revenue will be used on the roads and infrastructure where the money is collected. However, that should free up other money to address the needs of both rail and busway in the State. Mass transit is going to be critical in increasing economic development in the state. The modernization of Metro North, the addition of the Hartford Rail Line, the passing sidings installation and signalization of the Waterbury Line, the expansion of lines like New Canaan and Shore Line East, and CT Fastrak are examples of what we need to do to further improve our infrastructure to lay the groundwork for a boom in economic development.

The implementation of tolls would also address the “lock box” issues that have been talked about the last few years. Money in the Transportation Fund has always been an easy target to divert money for unrelated projects. This has led to a serious deterioration in our roads and bridges, with an estimated cost by the Society of Engineers of 30 billion dollars to provide road facilities that would meet expectations of roadway users into the next 30 years. Connecticut certainly does not need a repeat of the Mianus Bridge disaster.

Walkable, sustainable mixed-use communities around our transportation hubs are a critical step in attracting business and in keeping our young people in our state. This will further assist in relieving congestion while giving people other options for getting to and from work. This will be critical in the Hartford area, when the much-needed work on the highway viaduct begins. This is a necessary project that will take years to complete, while causing massive slow-downs while driving in the Hartford and surrounding areas.

In conclusion, it is imperative for Connecticut to address these congestion and infrastructure needs, and the well thought out addition of tolls giving state residents reduced rates through EZ Pass and tax benefit for money paid for tolls and transportation while not burdening future generations with debt is the answer.

Dated: April 22, 2019