



**TESTIMONY OF
THE CONNECTICUT MESSENGER COURIER ASSOCIATION**

**BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE'S TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2009, 10:00 AM, ROOM 1E
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING**

Good Morning, my name is Kevin Maloney. I am the President and CEO of Northeast Express Transportation, Inc. located in Windsor Locks and I'm appearing today in my capacity as President of the Connecticut Messenger Courier Association (CMCA). CMCA opposes **SB 431, An Act Concerning the Establishment of EZ Pass Tolls on State Highways and Bridges, and HB 6213, An Act Reinstating Toll Booths on Major Highways.**

The Connecticut Messenger Courier Association is made up of mostly owner operated small businesses engaged in both scheduled and non-scheduled transportation of such things as pharmaceuticals, lab specimens, payrolls, banking instruments, legal documents and the like. We're affiliated with the Messenger Courier Association of the Americas (MCAA), a national organization whose members operate in excess of ninety thousand (90,000) vehicles daily in expedited transportation.

Reinstitution of any form of tolls in Connecticut will have multiple adverse effects:

- . Safety
- . Environmental and
- . Economic

Safety

Because Connecticut is the gateway to New England, a large percentage of vehicles, both private and commercial utilize our highways en route to other New England states. This is especially true in the summer months when countless numbers of cars come through our state on their way to vacation spots in upper New England. These folks are not likely to have an electronic tolling payment system on board and consequently will have to manually pay the toll fee. When drivers carelessly change lanes in order to get into the appropriate cash or EZ pass lane, accidents inevitably occur.

Let's not forget the tragic accidents at our toll booths that took so many lives in the past and were the primary reason we removed them. Is the additional revenue worth the risk that further lives will be lost? We do not think so. While it is true that the electronic collection of tolls is likely to reduce the number of vehicles manually paying at our borders to utilize Connecticut's road system, it will not eliminate the very safety issues that prompted the removal of the toll booths in the first place.

Further, our experience is that drivers will frequently seek alternative routes, switching to back roads which are often not designed for additional through traffic or, in the case of Fairfield County, driving on city streets that are already overburdened and congested.

Environmental

This will clearly result in increased pollution as the vehicles await their turn at the attendant's station, and one only needs to pass through the toll booths at the connection of the Massachusetts Turnpike and I-84 in Southbridge on a weekend to witness these conditions.

Economic

Tolls placed at our borders are simply discriminatory, penalizing those Connecticut citizens who travel outside our state to get to their work place or to do business. This particularly affects those who live along the borders of New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, many of whom travel to those states on a daily basis. It adds yet another expense to their lives which today they can ill afford to bear.

This discriminatory fee will also affect many of our members who do cross border business. Those locked into contractual agreements for transportation which takes them beyond our borders will be unable to recover those costs in the short term, if ever. In fact, if I'm a business person of any kind located in one these border towns, the tolls will be yet another cost of doing business out of state, layered on the already higher taxes, fuel and otherwise, that I pay here in Connecticut as compared to the surrounding states.

All of us operating in the private sector here in Connecticut pay some of the highest taxes in the nation as it is. At what point do all these increases in the tolls, fees and permits that are being proposed render our state's business community at large non-competitive?

Conclusion

Reinstating tolls is bad for the public safety and bad for the environment. We don't need to put more lives at risk, particularly those in the border communities, in a quest for further tax revenue. Furthermore, it makes little economic sense to use tolls as a revenue generator when the anti-competitive gross receipts tax is already high and could generate sufficient funding for our roads and bridges if approximately half wasn't diverted for other purposes.

Consequently, **the Connecticut Messenger Courier Association opposes SB 431 and HB 6213.** We ask that you do not favorably report either concept. This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.