

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

Written Testimony

Submitted by Gloria Mills, Executive Director

Transportation Committee

February 23, 2009

Senator DeFronzo, Representative Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee, on behalf of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) I write in support of SB 431, SB 445, and HB 6269 as a means to address the cost of congestion and strengthen the Special Transportation Fund to ensure the resources are available to our current and future transit systems to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and to maintain and repair our existing roads and bridges. These bills will provide for tolling (all electronic tolling) and congestion pricing to be used to address the cost of congestion.

Connecticut's transit systems must be ready to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges and the state's existing roads and bridges must be maintained and repaired. If Connecticut is to provide a 21<sup>st</sup> Century multi-modal transportation system that is capable of moving the economy, reducing congestion and CO2 emissions, creating livable communities and improving the quality of life of its residents, then the state must generate revenues that are sufficient to meet the expenditures required.

The Special Transportation Fund (STF), which pays for most of Connecticut's transportation systems, is suffering from declining revenues, increasing expenditures, construction cost escalation, and unknown federal commitments. In FY 2010, the STF's cumulative balance is expected to go into deficit and the Special Transportation Fund will begin to experience annual operating deficits. This will require Connecticut, the state of steady habits, to change a few habits related to generating revenue for its transportation system and adopt a few new ones such as tolling and congestion pricing.

According to the final draft of the Connecticut Electronic Tolling and Congestion Pricing Study, economists have argued that "using flat user charges, as the gas tax, does not reflect the true value of highway travel under congested conditions." Furthermore, the study indicates that while the historical use of tolling has been to fund high-cost projects, it can now be used to manage congestion on a network with limited capacity.

The path to consensus about using tolls and congestion pricing is not easy according to the study because:

- not everyone understands what is being talked about when it comes to tolls and pricing;
- some people immediately assume they will have to either pay more or find an alternative travel mode; and,
- people may have negative feelings to the real or perceived problems with public transportation services.

Therefore, the Connecticut Electronic Tolling and Congestion Pricing Study suggests that "any consideration of congestion pricing must recognize the need to study and possibly enhance the public transit network."

Change is not easy, but we have arrived at time in our history when it is necessary for Connecticut's economy, reduction of congestion and CO2 emissions, and quality of life. Thank you.

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