SOUTH WESTERN REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Memorandum

To: **Transportation Strategy Board Members**
Transportation Committee of the State Legislature

From: **Jeb Walker**
Chairman, SWRMPO
First Selectman, Town of New Canaan

Dr. Floyd Lapp FAICP
Executive Director
South Western Regional Planning Agency

Cc: **Bruce Alexander, Chairman, Transportation Strategy Board**
Joseph Marie, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation

Date: **March 10, 2010**

Re: **Congestion Pricing: Border Tolls**

The South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization has strongly supported congestion pricing as the most economical way of improving the flow of traffic during the peak hours of travel. This has been the experience across the United States and other parts of the world. This approach also has the potential of encouraging some additional transit use and providing a revenue source where one does not exist.

The $1 million statewide study on, "Electronic Tolls and Congestion Pricing" concluded that border tolling at major highways is not congestion pricing and it can have significant local economic and environmental impacts from diversions. Despite these limitations, proposed legislation (Raised Bill #5474) calls for "...actions necessary for the establishment of electronic tolls at the State's borders." The stated purposed is to "...create a source of revenue for Connecticut's Special Transportation Fund." However, there should be a dual purpose: reduce congestion and raise revenue.

Rather than invest more time on an unworkable approach, SWRPA recommends pursuing electronic tolls and congestion pricing, using boothless technology on crowded, limited access routes such as I-95 and the Merritt Parkway to reduce congestion, raise revenue, and encourage more transit use.