

CGA Department of Transportation  
State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Transportation Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to S.B. No. 289(RAISED), the Act to establish tolls on new highways or extensions. I realize that this bill is tailored to establish a source of funding that will lead to the completion of the Rt. 11 extension. I also request that this letter, and my opposition to the proposed bill, be made part of the public record concerning this legislation.

The language in S.B. No. 289(RAISED) that proposes tolls to pay for the completion of Rt. 11 is vague, open ended and incomplete. There is no data submitted with the bill to support the need for tolls or the extension of Rt. 11. What are the facts and figures? How much is the proposed toll going to cost? What are the overall capital and maintenance costs? It has been reported that the total cost of the construction project (adding about 8.3 miles to Route 11) would be in excess of \$1 billion. I have heard figures as high as \$1.5 billion and I am told that does not include linking the Rt. 11 extension into a massive cloverleaf at I-95/I-395 (perhaps another \$1 billion?) I have also heard figures that Connecticut would be responsible for 20% of that cost and perhaps 100% of the clover leaf costs, at least \$200,000,000. This figure does not include maintenance costs or inevitable construction overrun costs. What will be the cost of building, maintaining, and staffing the toll facility? Will E-Z Pass be an option as in other states? Will security or compliance be an issue with the need for a State Police Officer at the site? According to the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments Long Range Transportation Plan FY 2011 – 2040, the average daily traffic volume from the existing Rt. 11 to Rt. 85 in Salem is 9500 vehicles. If you charge \$1 for the toll it will take approximately 58 years to collect enough tolls to make up the \$200,000,000 cost of Rt. 11 construction alone. And this figure doesn't include bond interest, maintenance, or other costs. 58 years!!

A \$1 toll may sound reasonable, but for a commuter along this route \$1 each way amounts to \$2 a day, \$10 per week, and \$520 each year, without counting weekend use. That would be an additional expense and loss of income for families during these difficult economic times. If you raise the toll amount to pay off the debt more quickly you are creating an even greater burden on those who use the roads. A \$2 toll comes to more than \$1,000 per year for the commuter. Will many drivers, especially commercial vehicles, choose to avoid the toll of an 8.3 mile extension of Rt. 11 causing a decrease in expected toll revenue? Existing highways already give ready access to the area.

I've heard complaints that our neighboring states charge us tolls to use their roads while everyone drives on Connecticut's roads for free. Ironically S.B. 289(RAISED) will impose a toll on a road that would be designed for use almost exclusively by Connecticut residents because it connects two Connecticut cities. The people who would be forced to bear the brunt of this toll are hard working Connecticut residents who do not need yet another daily expense especially when there is already a DOT plan in place to improve Rt. 85 that has been shelved by the DOT while decisions are being made about the Rt. 11 project. This DOT Rt. 85 improvement plan would solve all traffic and safety issues far into the future at far less cost.

Since the toll bill is linked to paying for Connecticut's portion of the debt on building the Rt. 11 extension I will address previous issues brought up in response to the Rt. 11 extension project. I disagree with the testimony offered during the 02/18/2011 hearing for this bill when it was called HB-6200 indicated that the commute along Route 85 from Salem to Waterford is a "45 minute ride." Please, that is about 11 miles per hour average

We can't afford the Route 11 extension and we don't need it. Please express my opposition to S.B. 289(Raised). Also, please, discontinue all plans to extend Route 11. Calling it a "Greenway" does not change the fact that it will be a raised four lane highway cutting through some of the most naturally beautiful areas of Connecticut. When you have a chance please take a ride through the Rt. 82/Rt. 85 areas of Salem, Montville, and Waterford. Enjoy that area of Connecticut. It is an area, including the businesses, that should be enjoyed and preserved.

DOT Committee members, thank you for your service to Connecticut. I hope that the Transportation Committee rejects the bid to impose a toll for future debt on an unnecessary project.

If I may be of any further assistance to you in making your decision concerning S.B.289(RAISED) and the Rt. 11 extension please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roger LaFrance". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Roger LaFrance