

## HOW BARRIER-FREE TOLLS CAN SAVE CONNECTICUT

When you think of tolls, you probably remember those awful booths that used to turn Connecticut highway travel into a stop-and-go nightmare (and, sometimes, a tragic inferno).

Push those images out of your mind. Connecticut banished its last toll booth in 1989, and we will never see them here again.

But today's technology does allow us to create all-electronic tolling (AET). It's a system that doesn't even require you to slow down as you pass.

By installing booth-free, non-stop tolling in the right places, we could net more than \$1 billion dollars a year for transportation and, just as important, begin to unclog our most crowded highways.

This idea comes from the state's Transportation Strategy Board. They conducted a two-year, \$1 million study, which was presented several years ago. The 500-page final report examined eight possible tolling scenarios, from tolling all limited-access roads to creating special toll lanes on otherwise free highways.

I support tolling for two reasons, both of which will attract new business to Connecticut—and with new business comes jobs:

### **Tolls will relieve congestion**

Traffic through the Stamford-Bridgeport corridor is projected to increase to the point that, by 2030, it will resemble the infinite-parking-lot highways of Los Angeles today. If you were a corporate decision maker, would you want to relocate your business to an area like that? Electronic tolling will allow for off-peak and peak rates that can help influence traffic congestion.

### **Tolls will fund transportation**

Our current budgets for roads and transit are underfunded, and in this economy, it will only continue to grow worse. Revenue from tolls will let us add the capacity we need—most importantly, add capacity to Connecticut's rails. Improved commuter train service will foster business growth along our transportation corridors.

There is another reason to support tolls: fairness. When we drive the New York Thruway or Massachusetts Turnpike, we're tossing our money into the coffers of those boarder states. Yet when cars and trucks cross into Connecticut, the gateway to New England, we Connecticut residents foot the bill. Why shouldn't theses users pay in Connecticut as we do in their States?

Tolls will improve our quality of life and bring jobs to Connecticut.

.....But as we continue to struggle with difficult economic issues, and as we search for additional areas to cut spending, it is important to Connecticut residents that our Government searches for areas of revenue to help avoid cuts to badly needed programs.

The Governor's proposal to eliminate the local municipal car tax, which we all know and expect we only lead to a State wide flat car tax, is not the solution. Please, leave the municipalities revenue alone. Allow us to deal with our own financial issues.

Nobody likes to pay tolls. But with unsustainable congestion looming, and the ongoing need to attract jobs and businesses, a smart approach to tolling is the answer Connecticut is looking for. Automatic Electronic Tolling is the answer!

Sincerely yours,

Rudy Marconi  
First Selectman  
Town of Ridgefield