

Dear members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Mark Marschall and I live in Somers, CT. Our State Senator, John Kissel, informed me that on Wednesday, February 25, state legislators will hold a Public Hearing on a proposal to put up tolls on Connecticut's borders. I am writing to you to tell you I am strongly opposed to border tolls. I live and work in a border town and frequently travel to Massachusetts to visit my family, my doctors, and other businesses and points of interest in the state where I lived for 31 years. The company where I work specifically targets Massachusetts customers in hopes of building our customer base by providing great deals and exceptional customer service to our neighbors to the north.

Our legislature needs to thoroughly scrutinize where the dollars in our tax base are being spent. I'm sorry, but adding tolls at the borders is nothing more than another tax. As a CT resident, I feel we are already over-taxed for what we receive in services. I feel our legislature needs to look at the purpose of each and every tax that has been approved over the decades and see where that tax money is currently being spent. For example, what was the purpose of the gas tax and where does that money go today? I feel our legislature needs to look at the benefits paid to state workers and compare them to the private sector. And, our legislature needs to do what a private sector business needs to do to survive. They don't raise the prices of their products and lose their competitive edge with their competition. They look at their processes and their spending and figure out how to do the same for less. And, they learn to say "NO" to certain benefits or expenditures until their profit margins are improved. I've been involved in manufacturing at Monsanto in MA and Bayer in CT for 30+ years and many times was asked to review my operations and see where I could cut spending to keep our products competitive and maintain our market share.

It's hard work but it's also very rewarding. By examining where our current tax base is being spent, I'm sure a lot will be learned and improvement opportunities will present themselves. Across the board spending needs to be cut. We want our neighbors from MA, NY, and RI to want to come to CT to spend their money. We want businesses to come to CT to take advantage of everything we have to offer. Adding tolls at our borders simply shows our neighbors that we want to tax them more. It's a strong message and a first impression to anyone visiting our state. And, it discriminates against those of us who live near the border.

Please stop this idea of implementing border tolls. Please start looking at where our tax dollars are currently being spent. Please make the tough decisions to do what is fair to get CT government spending back in line. You will feel good about what you accomplish.

Best regards,

Mark Marschall
Somers, CT