



CITY OF DANBURY

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February 24, 2015

TO: TRAtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Written testimony of Danbury Mayor Mark D. Boughton opposing the Institution of Tolls in the State of Connecticut:

First, studies have shown that tolls on state roads impact commuters financially; safety of drivers and start up costs that individually and in concert can impose a financial deficit right at the outset. Tolls should not be used as a thoughtless stop gap measure simply to try and fill a budget hole in the State budget because installation of a toll system is a very permanent and perennially costly undertaking that remains in place, potentially forever, even when the shortfall problem is over.

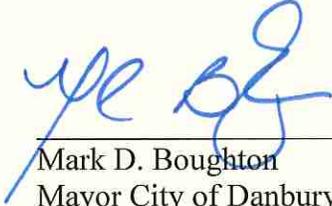
Secondly, and as a border City, Danbury and its surrounding economies rely extensively on westerly and border commuters, who are residents, workers and businesses drawing significant revenue into the City and State from all segments of our economy. For decades, Danbury and its surrounding feeder municipalities have been working very hard to encourage taxpayers, both personal and job producing as well as tax-paying businesses to locate and produce in the Danbury region. The imposition of a toll structure would invariably send an extremely unfortunate message that not only do we intend to tax you for the privilege of travelling in and out of our area, slow you down, create a potential safety a traffic nightmare but also lose the competitive advantages western and other border municipalities have and can draw upon to build the State's economic structure.

Third, you will hear from many people, both on the private side and from business and even the political spectrum that the history of tolling creates a very negative travel and economic disincentive model that, once incorporated into the fabric of the State economy, cannot be easily extracted...damage done, people leave, people do business elsewhere, insurance rates change, tax revenues are impacted...all in exchange for a revenue stream that is far more regressive that a state looking for economic development can afford.

Here in Danbury, and in conjunction with the State itself, we just granted one of the State's major companies a set of significant tax incentive packages, thus persuading the international corporation and its employees to stay and grow here. What kind of message is sent where we then go ahead and impede free travel across our state and in the most sensitive border locations. All of the business development and incentivizing that have been done could end up neutralized at best, destructive at worst.

No, putting tolls on our roads makes no economic, strategic, logistic or common sense and should be rejected, with an eye toward a more sensible revenue raising or savings strategy. A little more thought will get us a lot farther along than impeding and effectively punishing our taxpayers and voters with such a backwards concept. WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue before you today.



Mark D. Boughton
Mayor City of Danbury Connecticut