



Statement of Rick Dunne, Executive Director, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, on Senate Bill 560, An Act Instituting Electronic Tolls On Connecticut's Highways, Senate Bill 751 An Act Establishing Electronic Tolls On Connecticut's Highways Using A Congestion Pricing System, House Bill 5458, An Act Establishing Electronic Tolls On Connecticut's Highways and House Bill 6058 An Act Concerning Electronic Tolls.

February 27, 2017

Senators Leone, Boucher, Representative Guerrera and members of the Transportation Committee

I am Rick Dunne, Executive Director of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG). Thank you for accepting my testimony in support of Senate Bill 560, Senate Bill 751, House Bill 5458 and House Bill 6058.

Generally, I would encourage the General Assembly to support concepts that would charge actual users, rather than general taxpayers for the cost of maintaining their transportation mode. Although I cannot take a specific position in support of the above-mentioned bills on behalf of the NVCOG as the Council has not taken a formal position, I would offer the following concepts for consideration by the Legislature in advancing such a plan:

- Establish a separate Authority to completely segregate such revenue from the general fund to be used exclusively for Transportation operations and maintenance.
- Authorize this Authority to enter into Public/Private Partnerships (P3) with private toll operators for the complete maintenance, operation and responsibility of toll roads.

Intelligent P3 agreements such as a recent deal between the state of Virginia and a private toll road operator capped that state's investment in these roadways, reduced Virginia's capital and operating costs below what they would have been as a state-run roadway and generates millions of dollars a year over 50 years for transit investments across the state.

Such a system is essential to giving Connecticut taxpayers relief and shifting the cost to actual system users, including the free riders from out of state. I note that other Atlantic Coast Corridor states employ modern tolling, making Connecticut effectively the only free ride around. This means that presently only Connecticut taxpayers bear the cost of state investments in our transportation system while Connecticut drivers who travel out of state make significant contributions to the transportation systems of those other states. The ability to gain revenue from out of state drivers presented by tolling is significant.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.