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February 27, 2017

Representative Antonio Guerrero, Chair; and Senator Carlo Leone and Senator Toni Boucher, Co-Chairs
Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2300
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

RE: Senate Bill 560 An Act Instituting Electronic Tolls On Connecticut's Highway
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
House Bill 6058 An Act Concerning Electronic Tolls

Dear Chair Guerrero and Co-Chairs Leone and Boucher and Members of the Transportation Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the bills SB560, SB751, HB5458, and HB6058 reintroducing tolls to Connecticut highways. The four bills before the Transportation Committee contain limited details on how tolls would be implemented in Connecticut and who would be responsible for decisions and oversight. The reintroduction of tolls will have a significant impact on the state's residents. It is essential that a comprehensive implementation plan be created and presented so that an informed debate can take place and the best efforts are made to avoid unintended consequences.

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments has not had a chance to take a position on these bills or on highway tolls. Therefore, I am going to present a list of questions and comments regarding the concept of tolling.

- What roads will be tolled and what technology will be used?
- Who will oversee implementation of tolls?
- Who will operate toll collection?
- How will toll rates be set?
- Will state highways be operated by private entities?
- How will toll revenue be protected from being used on non-highway or transportation projects?
 - Would toll revenues go into the proposed transportation lock box?
- Will federal highway grants to Connecticut be reduced if interstate highways are tolled?
- Will the state gas tax be reduced or eliminated?
- Will Connecticut residents get a discounted rate?
 - What other exemptions will be given?
 - Electric / hybrid cars
 - HOV
- What communities may be disproportionately affected and what are the potential equity issues?

- Will host municipalities who provide emergency services to toll roads get reimbursed for those services?
- If operated by a private entity, will that entity pay property tax to municipalities for toll collection equipment and gantries?
- Will local or short trips be exempted or discounted?
- What are the traffic implications of tolls, particularly drivers seeking ways to avoid them? What local roads may be affected?
- What are the economic impacts of tolling highways?
- Will tolling be open ended or will it expire after a certain number of years?

RiverCOG looks forward to working with the Transportation Committee and the Connecticut Department of Transportation on the issue of tolls. I strongly believe that discussions about the implementation of tolling should be inclusive of all the stakeholders, including the municipalities that host our state's expressways. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Samuel S. Gold".

Samuel S. Gold, AICP
Executive Director