



## State of Connecticut

### SENATE

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### Testimony

#### *In Opposition of:*

*S.B. 560 – An Act Instituting Electronic Tolls on Connecticut’s Highways*

*S.B. 751 – An Act Establishing Electronic Tolls on Connecticut’s Highways Using a  
Congestion Pricing System*

*H.B. 5458 – An Act Establishing Electronic Tolls on Connecticut’s Highways*

*H.B. 6045 – An Act Instituting Congestion Variable Pricing Lanes on interstate Highways*

*H.B. 6058 – An Act Concerning Electronic Tolls*

**February 27, 2017**

Senator Boucher, Senator Leone, Representative Guerrero, Senator Suzio, Representative Arce, Representative Carney, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 560, Senate Bill 751, House Bill 5458, House Bill 6045 and House Bill 6058. Year-after-year I have been a persistent voice in opposition to the reinstatement of tolls not only in my district, but throughout the State of Connecticut. Emails, calls and letters have already flooded my desk, urging me to oppose these toll proposals, and after examining them, I must take a firm stance in opposition to the reinstatement of tolls.

Tolls would be another financial burden on residents who already pay sales, income and gas taxes. Connecticut families pay one of the highest gas taxes in the country for transportation purposes, but the governor regularly repurposes those funds and sweeps that account. Before we can ask the hardworking citizens of this state to pay even more money in taxes for something they have already paid for, we need to make sure that the money is protected. Tolls should not be considered without a constitutionally protected lock box. It is the only fair and equitable way the taxpayers of our great state can get the peace of mind that their sacrifice for transportation investment will actually be spent on transportation.

Tolls have the potential to create traffic diversions to alternatives routes and will affect local roadways and businesses and there is a significant capital costs associated with deploying electronic tolling. In the midst of a financial crisis we should be looking to make structural changes to our budget and spending – not looking to place yet another tax on Connecticut families.

According to the Department of Transportation's: A Conceptual Look at Tolling Highways in Connecticut study; the one-time capital cost to fully deploy all-electronic tolling statewide would be between \$450 and \$600 million depending on how many routes were included, and only approximately 25-30 percent of revenue from statewide tolling of all interstates and expressways would come from out-of-state motorists.

I have also heard from many business owners in my district. Many have expressed concern that travelers will be less likely to visit and invest in their communities because of the cost of tolls. Connecticut towns could lose a great deal of revenue. Additionally, business owners have even expressed concern about the increased congestion on local roads which are used to get to their businesses in a timely fashion. While I understand that our state is on the edge of a fiscal cliff, rather than spend money the state does not have, we in the legislature should adopt policies that reduce excess government spending in order to maintain our infrastructure and necessary services. In a time where families and businesses are struggling in Connecticut we should look to support them and think of ways to bring tourists and travelers in our state – not divert them elsewhere.

The more taxes and burdens we place on our residents the less money they have in their pockets to spend in our local economy and the bottom line is that tolls would add another tax onto many of our families who simply are trying to get to work to make ends meet and provide for their families.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter which will have a huge impact on the constituents of the 21<sup>st</sup> Senatorial District, which includes the towns of Stratford, Shelton, Monroe and Seymour.

Sincerely,

Kevin C. Kelly  
State Senator, 21<sup>st</sup> District