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Public Hearing Testimony
February 27, 2017
Transportation Committee
Michael McLachlan, State Senator, 24th District

SB 560 An Act Instituting Electronic Tolls On Connecticut's Highways
SB 751 An Act Establishing Electronic Tolls On Connecticut's Highways Using A Congestion Pricing System
HB 5458 An Act Establishing Electronic Tolls On Connecticut's Highways
HB 6045 An Act Instituting Congestion Variable Pricing Lanes On Interstate Highways
HB 6058 An Act Concerning Electronic Tolls

Dear Senator Boucher, Senator Leone, Representative Guerrero, Representative Carney, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am testifying today in opposition of SB 560, SB 751, HB 5458, HB 6045 and HB 6058. The purpose of these pieces of legislation is to establish electronic tolls on Connecticut's highways.

I am opposed to the idea of placing electronic tolls on our highways. Our residents are already one of the highest taxed citizens in the United States. Tolls would just be another tax they would have to pay in addition to the income, sales, and gas taxes.

One of the main arguments in favor of tolls is that we need to generate revenue for the state. In reality, the state has a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

For years, the state has been raiding the Special Transportation Fund and diverting its funds to the general fund. Without a sufficient 'Lock Box' on this fund where there is specific language requiring state courts to enforce the provision, there is no reason to believe that this practice would end with the toll revenue.

Drivers will also travel local roads in order to avoid tolls on our highways. This will especially be seen in my district if tolls are placed on the border of Connecticut and New York State. An estimated 13,800 vehicles a day will revert to this practice just at the border change on Interstate 84 in Danbury.

Such diversion to smaller, local roads causes immense wear. Projects to restore the damage will inevitably be required and will put a strain on our already strained local budgets.

Installing electronic tolls on our highways is also a costly endeavor. According to the Department of Transportation's: A Conceptual Look at Tolling Highways in Connecticut study; the one-time capitol cost to fully deploy all-electronic tolling statewide would be between \$450 and \$600 million depending on how many routes were included. Most of the revenue made from tolls would also be from Connecticut residents, as only approximately 25-30 percent of revenue would come from out-of-state motorists.

It is evident that tolls would just be an additional tax to the residents of Connecticut. Our residents are taxed enough, and tolls will just add to the financial burden that many of our families are facing.

It is time for us to stop looking for new revenue options when our spending is not under control.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael A. McLachlan". The signature is fluid and written in black ink.

Michael A. McLachlan
State Senator – 24th District