

To the Legislative Transportation Committee

Re: Proposed tolls legislation

Sirs, I'm writing to oppose any proposal to establish tolls in our state.

Have you notice the recent economic boom in Connecticut? Me neither. **Because it's not happening!** While the nation as a whole has been prospering economically, Connecticut has been missing out. Why? I believe it is because of high state taxes, excessive business regulations and high energy costs. These three factors make it very difficult for a business located in our state to compete in the national or international markets.

Over the past 8 years, the state legislature and governor have inflicted record breaking tax increases on us. And the governor is proposing more of the same. Taxpayer simply can't afford more taxes. And establishing tolls is in reality establishing a new tax. People are fleeing the state because it is no longer affordable to live here.

During this time period, state gas taxes and DMV proceeds have not been used for their rightful purpose. The funds have gone into the general fund, while the state has chosen to bond many road projects. And if you really look at the past several state budgets, they have exceeded the state constitutional spending cap, and the legislature has chosen to further expand spending by the use of bonding. **This is why there currently isn't enough money to fund road repairs and project.** *It is not the fault of taxpayers for our current predicament. And taxpayers shouldn't be punished for the errors of state legislature and governor.*

Along these lines, the governor has boasted that tolls in our state could raise a **billion** dollars annually. Where is that money coming from? News stories report estimates of 70% of the toll revenue would come from state residents and businesses. That's **\$700 million pulled out of the state economy!**

The governor is in la,la land if he thinks the state's economy will grow by hitting the residents with a \$700 million tax! He's crazy to think businesses will relocate to our state while facing our current economic conditions.

So what do we do now? **We wait until we can afford new road projects.** We return to using the gas tax and DMV proceeds directly for road repairs, maybe a "lockbox" for gas taxes. If the legislature chooses to create a positive economic environment, within a few years our state will experience a growth in tax income and will have the option to spend it wisely.

The establishment of tolls in our state will harm our state as much as the income tax did. Our state's economy really hasn't grown since that time. Plus, just as the income tax has grown and expanded over the years, the possibility of the tolls expanding over the years is also "endless." The legislature's appetite for taxing and spending grows every year. It's time to go on a financial diet!

The fact remains, whether you like it or not, that we can't have our cake and eat it, too. We can't experience economic and job growth while taxing businesses and residents to death. It's time to focus on tightening the state's budget belt so economic prosperity can return to our state.

David Lyon

23 Winter St.

Willimantic, CT 06226; (860) 428-4208.