

Committee on Transportation  
Public Hearing – March 6, 2019

H.B. No. 7202 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CONNECTICUT'S  
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**In support**

Dear Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Senator Devlin, Representative Martin and Members of the Committee,

The Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Inc. supports this bill for the reason that the current funding streams supporting the Special Transportation Fund cannot sustain current systems and services into the future. Additionally, this proposal on electronic tolls presents the only solution that we have seen thus far that does not saddle the Connecticut taxpayers with 100% of the burden of the cost to repair, maintain and improve the systems across the State. Electronic tolling systems provide a solid policy basis as a dependable, long-term, user-based, dedicated funding stream, where the users of the systems are paying for the systems.

Connecticut needs tolls as a dependable, user-based funding stream soon. Decades of limited funding have forced the state to make investments in some areas of transportation at the expense of others, leading the systems down a path of slow deterioration on a whole.

It is well-documented that Connecticut's transportation systems are inadequate, congested and deteriorating. Reports on Connecticut's transportation systems indicate that the state's transportation systems are failing and require billions of dollars in repairs and enhancements. For example:

- A 2017 report by the American Road and Builders Association held that 57 percent of Connecticut roads eligible for federal aid are rated "not acceptable", which is the second highest percentage in all 50 states; 33.5 percent of Connecticut's bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, which is well above the national average of 23 percent; and ConnDOT estimates that repairing or replacing four key rail bridges, of the 257 rail bridges in the state, will cost over \$3 billion.
- A 2017 report by TRIP, a national transportation research group, held that driving on deficient roads cost Connecticut motorists a total of \$6.1 billion annually in the form of additional vehicle operating costs, congestion related delays and traffic crashes. TRIP also held that this deteriorating infrastructure has a detrimental impact on the overall quality of life in the state. Residents spend over 45 hours per year stuck in traffic, valuable time that they could be spending with family and friends. Moreover, as a corridor state, our local economy is reliant on a strong transportation system.

At the current levels of funding, the situation continues to decline. Analysis has shown that the state should be spending \$2 billion dollars per year, over the next 30 years, just to maintain current levels of service. At a level of approximately \$1.2 billion, this year is another year that the state continues to fall farther behind.

Existing revenue streams and financing mechanisms supporting the state's transportation programs cannot keep pace with the State's mounting transportation needs over the long-term. An electronic tolling system would provide an additional means to help fill a growing gap between current revenue streams and much needed transportation investments. However, it is important to note that an electronic tolling system will not address the short-term revenue challenges facing the Special Transportation Fund. An electronic tolling system can be part of a longer-term comprehensive strategy.

An electronic tolling system in Connecticut would provide funding for projects that are not easily supported through the existing federal and state public transportation and highway programs. It would enhance the current funding sources by providing new funding for projects, which would leave more of the traditional funding in the core transportation programs.

In Connecticut, there are several mega-projects in the preliminary engineering process. Any one of those projects, by itself, could devour the state's current transportation revenue streams. If one or two of those projects are funded by an electronic tolling system, more resources would be available through the core programs and the state would be in a better position to meet its service, maintenance and expansion needs. Likewise, there are many other projects that CTDOT has not begun to address due to a lack of funding sources. An electronic tolling system may be the ideal mechanism to fund one or more of those projects, which may not otherwise be delivered in the future.

An electronic tolling system could provide several benefits. It could fill a clear void that exists in federal and state transportation policy to support large-scale projects. An electronic tolling system could bring more revenue from local and private sources into the infrastructure funding scheme through programs such as the Federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, a Federal or State infrastructure bank, or public-private partnerships.

Connecticut needs to develop new revenue streams and financing mechanisms, such as an electronic tolling system, to meet its transportation needs into the future. Establishing an electronic tolling system could be a valuable part of a comprehensive long-term plan to sustain the transportation systems Connecticut needs.

There is little time to waste. The current funding sources will not support our current transportation systems and programs for much longer. Connecticut needs an adequate, long-term, dependable, user-based funding stream for transportation now.

For questions or additional information, contact Don Shubert at 860-529-6855 or [dshubert@ctconstruction.org](mailto:dshubert@ctconstruction.org). Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. This discussion is important to putting Connecticut's public transportation and highway programs on a solid foundation of fiscal stability.

Respectfully submitted:

Donald J. Shubert

*The Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Inc represents various sectors of the commercial construction industry in the state. Formed over 40 years ago, CCIA is an organization of associations, where various segments of the commercial construction industry work together to advance and promote their shared interests. CCIA members include contractors, subcontractors, material producers, suppliers, and affiliated organizations.*