



TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 6, 2019

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 99% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

HB 7202 AAC AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CONNECTICUT'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

CCM Supports HB 7202.

HB 7202 would enable the implementation of tolling on our highways and bridges to improve and expand Connecticut's transportation infrastructure. Any plan that is developed must include consistent and reliable funding that will ensure our existing infrastructure is safe, provide for needed improvement and expansion and serve to attract new companies to our state and lay the foundation for needed economic growth.

Now is the time we must make a choice, that choice must move Connecticut forward.

- Connecticut has over 17,365 miles of road of which more than 70% are classified as in poor to mediocre condition.
- Connecticut has 4,225 bridges and culverts of which approximately 25% classified as structurally deficient or obsolete.
- We have an aging rail system and a bus network that is not user friendly or efficient, which discourages people from using mass transit, forcing them into cars and onto congested highways.

These are the facts that we must face and that collectively we must address.

Having identified tolling as the needed and reliable revenue source to protect our infrastructure and promote economic growth, we must ensure that these revenues are spent in the most effective

and efficient manner. While the implementation of tolling is not popular and no one wants to impose additional fees on Connecticut residents, difficult times often demand difficult decisions. Additionally, while tolling may be a difficult option, it will provide the needed revenue to ensure our state has a means to maintain and expand a safe and efficient transportation network.

Current tolling studies have indicated that the proposed 50 gantries on I-84, I-91, I-95 and Rt. 15 as proposed by HB 7202 will generate revenues that may exceed \$800 million annually, \$320 million of which will be paid by out-of-state drivers and no longer providing these cars a free pass along our highways. CCM strongly believes efforts must be made to limit the fiscal impact on state residents by enacting options such as discounted pricing for state residents and variable rates based on number of axles. Tolling sites should not expand beyond the aforementioned highways.

As CCM's *This Report is Different* highlighted, while the need for new and diversified revenue is needed, it represents only part of a comprehensive solution. Any new revenue must be accompanied by meaningful measures to promote efficiencies and provide for the containment of costs. We must find a way to ensure any revenue raised from tolls go strictly toward enhancing our highways and bridges in the most cost efficient manner possible. We must ensure that the collection of these new revenues provide a discernable economic dividend for our residents that outweigh the costs they are being asked to pay.

CCM and its member towns and cities understand all too well the need for consistent and reliable funding and the impact that accompanies inconsistency and broken promises. If tolling on our highways is approved, it will provide the state with a steady and reliable funding source for Connecticut's transportation network, while the gas tax, among the highest in the nation, does not due to the fluctuations of the price of oil, more fuel efficient motor vehicles and consumers increasingly transitioning to electric vehicles.

It is essential that we honor the Transportation Lock Box that was overwhelmingly approved by Connecticut voters. It's a covenant you have with residents. With the additional revenue promised by tolling, the state must use this money to supplement existing revenues that have been dedicated to the Special Transportation Fund. Revenue generated by tolling must not be allowed to supplant but must supplement existing funding if we expect to see any meaningful improvement to our transportation infrastructure.

Thank you.



If you have any questions, please contact M. Randall Collins Jr., Advocacy Manager, at rcollins@ccm-ct.org or (860) 707-6446