



Connecticut Fund
for the Environment

Save the Sound®

**Testimony of Connecticut Fund for the Environment
Before the Transportation Committee**

Regarding

**H.B. No. 7280, AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE CREATION OF THE CONNECTICUT
TRANSPORTATION FINANCE AUTHORITY**

and

**H.B. 7202, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CONNECTICUT'S
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

March 6, 2019

Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE) is a non-profit organization with over 3,000 member households and 10,000 activists statewide. CFE, its bi-state program Save the Sound, and its Soundkeeper Program protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring citizens together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

Dear Co-Chairs Leone and Lemar, Vice-Chairs Bergstein and Simms, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin, and members of the Transportation Committee:

Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE) submits this testimony regarding H.B. 7280 and H.B. 7202, both of which allow for the creation of a tolling plan that could include variable tolling, otherwise known as congestion pricing. Congestion pricing refers charging higher prices under congested conditions (peak periods) and lower prices at less congested times (off-peak) and locations in order to reduce peak-period traffic volumes. Tolls can vary based on a fixed schedule, or they can be dynamic, meaning that rates change depending on the level of congestion that exists at a particular time.¹ **CFE supports congestion pricing** as a smart strategy for improving transportation system performance, including reductions in delays and idling, reducing Connecticut's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution, and generating revenue for the funding of clean transportation infrastructure improvements.

¹ Victoria Transport Policy Institute (2011). Road Pricing: Congestion Pricing, Value Pricing, Toll Roads and HOT Lanes. Retrieved from: <http://www.vtpi.org/tm/tm35.html>.

I. Congestion pricing would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

Transportation currently accounts for **38% of Connecticut's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.**² Connecticut needs to quickly and aggressively move to reduce these emissions in order to meet the mandate in Public Act 18-80 to reduce economy-wide GHG-emissions 45% from 2001 levels by 2030.³ Reducing traffic congestion and vehicle-miles-travelled is a critical component to Connecticut's climate mitigation strategy. Cities such as London, Singapore and Stockholm have reported a reduction in ozone and particulate matter emissions by as much as 20% following the implementation of congestion pricing⁴—results that would be expected in the United States if similar policies were implemented.

Transportation is also the **largest single source of other air pollutants in the country.** This poses a major barrier to improving Connecticut's air quality, which was recently rated among the worst in the country.⁵ Low-income populations and communities of color are more likely to reside or work near major roadways and as a result face increased exposure to transportation-related air pollution such as ozone and particulate matter, as well as increased vulnerability to the health impacts of exposure to air pollution.⁶ In the American Lung Association's Annual "State of the Air" report for 2018, levels of air pollution in Connecticut were ranked among the worst in the country.² **Of the eight counties in Connecticut, seven received failing grades for levels of ozone.**² This level of ozone pollution indicates air quality conditions in which risk of developing asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and cardiovascular disease are substantially higher.² 3.47 million residents of the State of Connecticut, or 96% of the state's population, live in areas with poor air quality.² New Haven County, Fairfield County, and Hartford County, home to the three largest urban centers of New Haven, Bridgeport, and Hartford, report the highest levels of ozone pollution as well as the most severe health impacts from air pollution in the state.⁷

The negative impacts of exposure to transportation-related air pollution on human health are well-established. According to the World Health Organization, exposure to air pollution increases risk of cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness, cancer, adverse birth outcomes, and premature death.⁸

² DEEP, Connecticut Statewide Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2016, Slide 7, Retrieved from:

https://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/climatechange/publications/ct_2016_ghg_inventory.pdf.

³ Governor's Council on Climate Change, *Building a Low Carbon Future for Connecticut: Achieving a 45% GHG Reduction by 2030* (released Dec. 18, 2018), at 28, Retrieved from:

https://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/climatechange/publications/building_a_low_carbon_future_for_ct_gc3_recommendations.pdf

⁴ The International Council on Clean Transportation. (April 2010). Congestion Charging: Challenges and Opportunities. Retrieved from: http://www.theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/congestion_apr10.pdf

⁵ American Lung Association. (2018). *State of the Air 2018*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.lung.org/assets/documents/healthy-air/state-of-the-air/sota-2018-full.pdf>

⁶ US Environmental Protection Agency. (2019). How mobile source pollution affects your health. Retrieved from:

<https://www.epa.gov/mobile-source-pollution/how-mobile-source-pollution-affects-your-health#near%20roadway>

⁷ Cromar KR, Gladson LA, Perlmutter LD, Ghazipura M, & Ewart GW. (2016). American Thoracic Society and Marron Institute report. Estimated excess morbidity and mortality caused by air pollution above American Thoracic Society-recommended standards, 2011-2013. *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*, (13)8. Retrieved from: <https://www.atsjournals.org/doi/10.1513/AnnalsATS.201602-103AR>

⁸ World Health Organization. (2019). Air pollution. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/sustainable-development/transport/health-risks/air-pollution/en/>

II. Congestion pricing has been proven to be an effective method of reducing interstate highway congestion.

Traffic congestion is a persistent and growing problem in metropolitan regions across the United States, including in Connecticut, and imposes significant costs on residents and taxpayers. The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) estimated that in the United States, costs associated with traffic congestion were \$87.2 billion annually in 2007, with approximately 28 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted per year due to waste from inefficient vehicle operation as a result of congestion.⁹

Congestion pricing has been proven to be an effective method of combating the effects of traffic congestion in the United States. As explained by the Federal Highway Administration, “[t]he concept of tolling and congestion pricing is based on charging for access and use of our roadway network. It places responsibility for travel choices squarely in the hands of the individual traveler, where it can best be decided and managed. The car is often the most convenient means of transportation; however, with a little encouragement, people may find it attractive to change their travel habits, whether through consolidation of trips, car-sharing, by using public transportation, or by simply traveling at less congested times.”¹⁰

States such as California that have successfully implemented congestion pricing have seen a shift to the use of alternate routes, modes of travel, and destinations as well as a decrease in the frequency of highway trips. The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)’s November 2018 “Connecticut Tolling Options Evaluation Study” found that congestion pricing (peak period tolls) in combination with highway improvements yields nearly twice the congestion reduction benefit of tolls alone. The net congestion reduction for the combination is a travel time saving of about 27.9 million hours of travel time per year. Since most of this reduction would occur during peak traffic periods, it will provide substantial relief to Connecticut commuters.¹¹

III. The implementation of an all-electric toll collection system with congestion pricing would generate valuable revenue that could be reinvested in clean transportation.

The CTDOT Study estimates that a state-wide toll system would result in an estimated \$950 million in annual toll revenue, 40% of which is expected to be generated by out-of-state vehicles.¹² **This revenue would allow the CTDOT to modernize our public transit and invest in the electrification of our transportation sector, which would bring widespread economic, environmental and health benefits to Connecticut.**

⁹ The International Council on Clean Transportation. (April 2010). Congestion Charging: Challenges and Opportunities. Retrieved from: http://www.theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/congestion_apr10.pdf.

¹⁰ U.S. DOT, Federal highway Administration. (October 2008). Congestion Pricing, A Primer. Retrieved from: <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop08039/fhwahop08039.pdf>.

¹¹ Connecticut Department of Transportation. (November 2018). Connecticut tolling options evaluation study at p. 81. Retrieved from:

https://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dcommunications/press_release/ctdot_tolling_report_11142018.pdf

¹² *Id.*

For all these reasons, the Connecticut General Assembly should support including congestion pricing in tolling proposals as contemplated by H.B. 7280 and H.B. 7202.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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