

**Testimony of Patrick D. Jones
Executive Director & CEO
International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association
Before the Transportation Committee**

**Connecticut General Assembly
Wednesday, February 25, 2015
10:30 AM**

Chairman Guerrero, Chairman Maynard, Ranking members Boucher and O’Dea, my name is Patrick Jones and I am the Executive Director & CEO of the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA).

IBTTA is the worldwide association for the owners and operators of toll facilities and service providers to the toll industry. IBTTA is the leading worldwide association promoting state of the art, innovative user-based transportation financing solutions to address the critical infrastructure challenges of the 21st century. Founded in 1932, IBTTA has more than 60 toll agency members in the United States and hundreds more in 20 countries on six continents.

I’m here today to testify and offer my perspective regarding many of the issues before you on tolling, tolling solutions, and other transportation funding and financing options.

The U.S. has a rich history with regard to tolling, dating to colonial times and continuing to the present day with more than 120 toll agencies operating in 35 states. Throughout the country, tolling has proven to be a viable, proven, and increasingly popular tool to fund major surface transportation infrastructure projects.

Connecticut holds a unique place in history as one of the few states to eliminate an established toll system in 1985 and passing the full burden of maintaining the roadways on to the State DOT. We appreciate the reasoning for the toll removal decision and very much respect the legislature’s willingness to revisit the concept as a potential means of addressing the state’s transportation challenges.

We can very definitely assure you that the practice and technology of toll collection has advanced significantly in the last 30 years and no longer requires physical toll plazas or toll collectors, eliminating traffic queues and their related safety and delay issues.

Electronic toll collection (ETC) was introduced in the United States in 1989 and has since become ubiquitous among all major toll agencies in the country. Existing toll agencies face the burden of making the transition away from traditional toll collection (and plazas) while new tolling entities have the opportunity to design their systems to incorporate non-stop, all electronic toll collection from the outset, saving considerably on construction costs and avoiding the need to impede traffic flow.

H.B. No. 6818 recognizes these new practices and opportunities and the issues that need to be resolved to acquire Federal approval for reinstating tolling in Connecticut.

Today's modern toll agencies are extremely productive and efficient in their ability to generate revenues to support their operations and investment needs, while also creating value for customers through high service levels, safety, reliability and mobility options.

We appreciate that this topic can incite strong opinions in the electorate. But we also believe there is great merit in fairly considering all transportation funding options when so few exist and many of them are just as distressing or even more distressing to your constituents.

Tolls establish a direct connection between the use of the road and payment for that use. This is especially important when you consider that vehicles traveling through the state may not be paying for their use of and wear and tear on Connecticut's roads if they are using fuel purchased out of state. Tolling re-establishes a direct connection between drivers, the trips they make, and the time and routes they use.

IBTTA recognizes that tolling is not the only solution to fund surface transportation. Nor do we suggest that tolls and road pricing are appropriate for all transportation projects. There are roadways in the United States with too little traffic or demand to effectively recover the cost of their operation through tolls. But tolls can be an important solution for certain projects.

In the past decade, we have seen a resurgence in toll financing to support new construction and reconstruction projects sponsored by state, county and local governments. These include traditional toll projects, concession based projects, priced managed lanes and the conversions of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes.

The appeal of tolling is that it offers an option, subject to local opinions and authority, which doesn't rely on other funding sources to build, operate or maintain vital transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments supporting the tolling proposals you are considering. We will follow your deliberations with interest and would be happy to offer our assistance in pursuing these goals.

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