

From The House

Tolls: Fact vs. Fiction

By: State Rep. Matt Ritter

If you drive up or down the east coast you pay tolls – except in Connecticut. The revenues fund critical transportation infrastructure repairs and improvements, and our state's highways are in dire need of work.

Today's tolls are not the dangerous, traffic-jamming devices of the past. And funds collected through tolls must be spent on transportation related expenses. Plus, out of state Drivers help foot the bill.

Myth: “Federal Guidelines Will Not Allow Tolls”

FACT: Federal laws allow tolling on Interstate highways under several different provisions and special programs. One option available to CT is the Value Pricing Pilot (VPP) program. CT is one of 15 states designated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to be able to use this provision to implement tolls.

Myth: “A Study Should Be Done First”

FACT: Implementing tolls is like implementing any capital project for CTDOT. Environmental approvals, rights-of-way, design, and federal approval all have to be completed before putting a transportation project out to bid. This happens before implementation and operation.

Myth: “CT Will Be Required To Repay Federal Funds Received For I-95 Since The Removal Of Tolls”

FACT: Repayment would not be required if CT restores tolling under the terms of any federal tolling program.

Myth: “No Proof Tolls Will Raise Enough Revenue”

FACT: CTDOT conducted two detailed studies under the VPP program, and the analyses demonstrated that tolling in congested corridors could raise substantial revenue as well as help reduce congestion. For example, it is estimated that tolls along I-95 and Route 15 from NY to New Haven would generate net revenues of about \$366 million annually.

Myth: “Toll Money Will Be Used For Non-Transportation Related Expenses”

FACT: Federal law restricts the use of toll revenue to specified transportation-related purposes.

The toll system would be an all-electronic system, similar to the one recently installed on the Mass Pike. These electronic systems use EZPass readers and cameras mounted on a gantry that spans over the highway (pictured below are examples). This eliminates traffic delays and accidents common to old tollbooth collection systems.

Out-of-state drivers would no longer get a free ride while driving through our state on our roads and bridges. It is estimated that 30% of toll revenues would be paid by out- of state drivers.