

LCO No. 373: 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:

I support this bill: The funding streams currently feeding the Special Transportation Fund are not sufficient to fund the kind of projects needed to repair and sustain Connecticut's historically under-funded transportation infrastructure. Large trucks disproportionately harm our roads and bridges. It's reasonable to ask them to contribute toward funding repairs and maintenance of our roads and bridges.

It's well-documented that Connecticut's transportation systems are inadequate, congested and deteriorating. Reports on elements of the state's transportation infrastructure indicate that they're failing and require billions of dollars in repairs and enhancements. Strong and efficient transportation systems are essential to keeping and attracting businesses and taxpayers, and to enhancing our quality of life.

The question is how to finance the work: by issuing bonds or collecting tolls? Here are some facts:

Bonds: Bonds issued by the State to fund transportation projects get repaid with taxes that we all pay.

All Connecticut taxpayers pay to sustain our transportation infrastructure whether they use the roads and bridges or not. And since these bonds get paid back over 30 or 40 years, it's not only we who pay for them - it's also our children and our grandchildren.

Tolls: Tolls are paid by the drivers who use the roads and bridges. At least 40% of the drivers on Connecticut roads and bridges are from out-of-state.

There are several ways tolls can be assessed. Sharing the burden of funding transportation projects with very large trucks makes sense. Very large trucks disproportionately harm our roads and bridges: it's estimated that one 18-wheeler truck causes as much damage as 9,600 cars. Paying tolls will be nothing new to operators of large trucks—they're already paying tolls in 35 states. Of all the states on the I-95 corridor, Connecticut is the only one that allows trucks to pass continuously through the state at no cost. (Note that it costs over \$100 for a truck to cross the George Washington bridge.)

We pay their tolls when we travel through other states - but out-of-state drivers get a free ride in Connecticut. Very large trucks add the most stress to our roads and bridges – they should help out in our time of need. This bill will correct this inequity as regards large trucks.

A note re: Section 8 of the draft bill:

I do not support the provisions that would restrict future legislators from enacting legislation to charge tolls on cars. Our long history of underfunding has resulted in a serious need to invest large amounts of money in Connecticut's transportation infrastructure. Tolls on cars-- and, particularly, on the roughly 40% of out-of-state cars on our roads -- would help us create more economic vitality for the State of Connecticut. **It's short-sighted to only assess tolls on very large trucks.**

Jackie Kaiko, Stamford