

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to express my complete and total opposition to LCO-373. There are many reasons to oppose this foolish and hastily prepared legislation.

This bill is clearly meant to serve as a gateway to tolling all vehicles on every major highway. The loopholes left in this bill to allow further tolling and higher rates after two years are built in by design. Governor Lamont showed his true vision in 2019 when he attempted to materialize his first reversal on tolls with HB7280 and 7202. After those bills were rejected by the public and the legislature Governor Lamont and a few select lawmakers have decided to again refute the will of the people and retool tolls into a more palatable trucks-only format. The smoke screen is thin and anyone who takes the time to read the new bill can see the true intent is to serve as a steppingstone toward further taxation. Oddly enough one of the biggest critics of trucks-only tolls is Ned Lamont himself.

A quote from Governor Lamont from February 2019 (after he had initially reversed his position on trucks only tolls and proposed tolling all vehicles):

“As I learned about the issue, I indicated my support for tolling only tractor trailer trucks, as they do in Rhode Island. This would provide at least some revenue to maintain our system, though not enough to upgrade it. While we are awaiting a ruling from the courts regarding truck-only tolling, our attorneys are pretty certain that if permitted, the tolling could only be done on specific bridges and the generated revenue would be reserved for those bridges, not for congestion pricing. Assuming our attorneys are correct, the truck-only option provides too little revenue, too slowly and too piecemeal to make a meaningful difference.”

What changed since then?

The very foundation of this bill is built on sand, as we can see from the current ongoing litigation in Rhode Island. The trucking industry has launched a lawsuit challenging the legality of trucks-only tolls. The state of Connecticut will immediately face such lawsuits if this bill is passed. It is irrational to proceed with this bill, especially after rushing to pass it before Rhode Island settles its case.

In the unlikely scenario that truck-tolls did hold up in court, we as a state would still be left with a serious problem. The higher cost of shipping would be passed down to the consumer. Our vulnerable citizens will be hurt most by this. Almost everything we buy is transported by truck and almost everything we buy would become more expensive. Frankly, we have a working class that is already treading water in this state. Lawmakers cannot, in good faith, strike another blow to working folks who are simply doing their best to feed their children and pay their bills. Economic stagnation comes with moral consequence, economic strife leads to real pain for our working families and children. All other options must be considered before punishing families with a regressive tax.

These are trying times, the economic situation in the state is dire. We need thoughtful solutions to the problems we face. LCO-373 has brought nothing but bureaucracy, ignorance, and shortsighted haste to the table. I say no to LCO-373, I hope our lawmakers will search their consciences and do the same.

- Eric M. Sacco  
Thomaston, CT