



## State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**REPRESENTATIVE BRANDON L. MCGEE**  
5TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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**CHAIR**  
HOUSING COMMITTEE  
BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN CAUCUS

**MEMBER**  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Support - LCO #373 "An Act Concerning the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation Infrastructure"

Dear Chairmen Representative Lemar, Senator Leone and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee,

Regardless of what side you're on for tolls, we are ultimately all gathered here for the same reason today. We want to see the state of Connecticut succeed and prosper. Most homeowners know that if your roof is leaking, you repair it. It may be expensive, but it's a no-brainer. Our state's transportation infrastructure is crumbling, outdated and inefficient, so we must fix it. Yes, it's expensive, yes, we need additional revenue, but our state has bridges and roads in disrepair, and for our safety and prosperity, we need a stable revenue stream to fund the repairs.

This endeavor is much broader than those 12 bridge projects identified in this bill. We are embarking on a project that will tackle our state's long-term transportation needs holistically. We need to increase rail service with the Hartford/New Haven line so we have trains running later in the evening. In the opposite direction we need increased service with the Hartford/Springfield line in the mornings so that workers have an easier commute. We need to connect our Capitol city to our main airport hub. We need to plan for the future today by installing the necessary infrastructure for the autonomous vehicles and incorporating green technologies into all these projects.

The I-84 viaduct is another major issue. Cutting through the heart of our city, the viaduct was obsolete when it was built over 50 years ago. Most people don't realize but driving under those overpasses and past the off ramp every day coming into the Legislative Office Building, you can see how much of it is just crumbling away. This longstanding structure is unsafe, and with toll revenue we will finally have the resources to move the highway below grade to help make our city whole.

This bill goes beyond transportation infrastructure funding. We need transit-oriented development that allows our citizens to live near rail, bus lines, and other multi-model transportation systems that reduce their reliance on cars so they can easily travel around the area where they live, work and send their children to school. Even more so, these projects and developments are accomplished by small and minority contractors, that means jobs for people in our communities.

Today proves a powerful point. The state legislature has no interest in tolling cars that's why we have this bill before you today. This isn't a trick, as many in this rancorous opposition would lead you to believe. Not to mention the fact that this legislation would **prevent toll rates from increasing beyond inflation and prevents the expansion of tolls to passenger vehicles without legislative**. I think this is a clear example of the legislature listening to their constituents and doing everything in our power to get it right and prevent this legislation from tolling cars.

I ask you not to give in to propaganda from the right. Why should our taxpayers bear the burden of paying 100% for all these necessary transportation improvements? Why should we deplete the security of our rainy-day fund when economists have projected an economic downturn in the next few years? Why would we cut funding to vital human services for seniors, children, the homeless, veterans? We need keep the programs that help low- and middle-class residents stay above water. It's time we put the cost of our transportation repairs on out-of-state 18 wheelers that do the most damage to our roads and bridges. Even though the taxpayers of this state will not be paying these tolls, they can rest assured that the funds collected are being spent correctly. These guarantees can be made because we passed a transportation lockbox, which prevents toll funds from being used on anything that's not transportation related. There will also be a new Transportation Oversight Council, which will ensure that we make the most cost-effective investments in all our transportation projects.

These projects will require significant investment, and they may not all be completed in my lifetime, but Connecticut will not be competitive unless we make these changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B McGee". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "B" and a cursive "McGee".

Brandon McGee  
State Representative  
5<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Hartford & Windsor