

Comments and Public Testimony - AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CONNECTICUT'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE. ([Link to Draft Bill 373](#))

Anthony Cherolis, Transport Hartford Coordinator at the Center for Latino Progress

Work address: 95 Park Street, Hartford CT 06106

Home Address: 37 Alden Street, Hartford CT 06114

Email: tony_cherolis@ctprf.org

(Send your own comments to tratestimony@cga.ct.gov)

202 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of
203 Transportation shall prioritize the completion of transportation projects
204 on and in the immediate vicinity of the tolled bridges described in
205 section 2 of this act, except if the commissioner determines that, due to
206 the presence of a toll gantry, a significant amount of traffic is diverting
207 from a highway onto local roads in the municipality where a toll is
208 located, the commissioner shall prioritize transportation projects to
209 mitigate such traffic diversions.

Comment on 202 through 209 – The immediate vicinity of tolled bridges should include the community impacts of the nearby interstate or tolled bridge including ramps, underpasses, and overpasses. The impacted vicinity should include a one-mile radius around the tolling location. Too often our interstates create significant negative community impacts from air pollution, excessive noise, and unsafe roads for local traffic, including those walking and biking as well as those driving. When possible, we should be repairing that community damage and improving community connections with Complete Streets for those that live and work near tolled locations.

273 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For each fiscal year during
274 which special tax obligation bonds issued pursuant to section 13b-74 to
275 13b-77, inclusive, on and after July 1, 2020, and prior to July 1, 2022, shall
276 be outstanding, the state of Connecticut shall not charge tolls for any
277 class of vehicle other than large commercial trucks, as defined in section
278 1 of this act, traveling over the bridges described in section 2 of this act.
279 The state of Connecticut does hereby pledge to and agree with the
280 holders of any bonds, notes and other obligations issued pursuant to
281 subsection (b) of this section that no public or special act of the General
282 Assembly taking effect on or after July 1, 2020, and prior to July 1, 2030,
283 shall alter the obligation to comply with the provisions of this section,
284 until such bonds, notes or other obligations, together with the interest
285 thereon, are fully met and discharged, provided nothing in this
286 subsection shall preclude such alteration (1) if and when adequate
287 provision shall be made by law for the protection of the holders of such
288 bonds, or (2) (A) if and when the Governor declares an emergency or
289 the existence of extraordinary circumstances, in which the provisions of
290 section 4-85 of the general statutes are invoked, (B) at least three-fifths
291 of the members of each chamber of the General Assembly vote to alter
292 such required compliance during the fiscal year for which the
293 emergency or existence of extraordinary circumstances are determined,
294 and (C) any such alteration is for the fiscal year in progress only.

Comment on 273 through 294 – It is unwise and unnecessary to effectively remove the future possibility of mid-size truck and car tolls from the purview of the legislature. As we increasingly adopt electric vehicles, more universal tolling will likely be needed to make up for falling gas tax revenue. We won't be able to make up that revenue loss by increasing tolling on a small percentage of semi-truck interstate users. The legislative process to get truck-only tolls was arduous and legislators know that they need to be acting in the interest of voters, or they lose their office. Creating a second, higher hurdle is likely to put the state again into the position of struggling to keep up with infrastructure maintenance and improvements. This will put the Connecticut at a competitive disadvantage relative to other states that have more leeway in responding to changing transportation challenges, interstate congestion, new technologies, and the climate emergency.

307 Sec. 10. Section 13b-13b of the general statutes is repealed and the
308 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

309 (a) There is established a Transportation Policy [Advisory] Council,
310 which shall be part of the [Executive] Legislative Department.

311 (b) The council shall consist of the following members:

Comment on 307 through 335 – The Transportation Policy Council should also include:

- an expert in the topic of increasing mode share and increasing safety for sustainable active transportation, walking and biking.
- A public health expert, with experience related to disparate health impacts of motor vehicle pollution and an understanding of the health benefits of increased walking and biking.

380 (2) To [review] approve or reject, in whole or in part, the five-year
381 transportation capital plan for the state developed annually by the
382 Department of Transportation pursuant to section 11 of this act, examine
383 the impact of such plan on the present and future transportation needs
384 of the state and evaluate whether such plan assures the development
385 and maintenance of an adequate, safe and efficient transportation
386 system;

Comment on 380 through 386 – We are in a climate emergency and we also know that the current interstate system has had extremely disparate impacts on Connecticut’s urban and diverse communities. This should be worded as such, “evaluate whether such plan assures the development and maintenance of an adequate, equitable, safe, efficient, and environmentally sustainable transportation system;

421 (11) To approve or reject any transportation project in the state
422 transportation improvement program developed by the Department of
423 Transportation pursuant to section 49 USC 5304(g), as amended from
424 time to time, prior to submission to the United States Department of
425 Transportation if such transportation project is not contained in the five-
426 year transportation capital plan and is estimated to cost fifty million
427 dollars or more. If the council does not approve or reject a transportation
428 project within fifteen days of receiving the state transportation
429 improvement program from the Department of Transportation, the
430 transportation project shall be deemed approved by the council;

Comment on 421 through 430 – If the council is expected to meet quarterly, shouldn't the council have at least 30 days to organize a special meeting to review and approve or reject a project? Fifteen days seems too short and could be used to intentionally sneak projects through between scheduled council meetings.

608 Upon receipt of such notification, the owner of such rented or leased
609 vehicle may notify the municipality as to whom the lessee was at the
610 time of such issuance of the notice of violation, the lessee's address,
611 motor vehicle operator's license number and state of issuance, and the
612 municipality shall issue such notice of violation to such lessee. A
613 participating municipality shall notify the commissioner of every owner
614 of a registered motor vehicle who has unpaid fines for more than five
615 parking violations committed within such municipality on and after
616 March 1, 1989. Upon receipt of such notification, the commissioner shall
617 not issue or renew the motor vehicle registration of such person until he
618 receives notification from such municipality that the delinquent fines
619 have been paid.

Comment on 517 through 619 – Blocking registration of a vehicle with unpaid parking tickets will have an inequitable impact on low-income motor vehicle owners that are already more likely to live in urban areas with parking restrictions. The existing enforcement and penalty options for accrued unpaid parking tickets are already more than enough. This would only be equitable if there was a "financial hardship" option to forgive a portion of unpaid parking tickets.