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Direct User Fees: the Centerpiece of a Renewed Transportation System

Toll Industry Endorses Proposal

The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association is pleased to endorse the December 8, 2010 Joint Statement of the members of the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission and the National Transportation Policy Project of the Bipartisan Policy Center. A central tenet of the joint statement is the critical role of direct user fees. As the current transportation funding system is eclipsed by improved fuel economy and alternative fueled vehicles, the value of a mileage-based user fee system becomes even more apparent.

IBTTA strongly supports the joint statement provision that “Congress should remove barriers to tolling and pricing.” Doing so would encourage states to begin the massive effort to reinvest in failing highways and build new ones. We should never forget that tolled turnpikes like those in Pennsylvania and other states were America’s first “superhighways” built without federal support long before the Interstate era.

IBTTA also applauds the joint statement provisions that “reliance on user funding should be restored and strengthened” and “we must begin to transition to a more direct user fee based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT).” Tolling is the original VMT fee in America. Now with nearly universal acceptance of electronic tolling and the rapid conversion of toll roads to all-electronic toll collection (AET), the toll industry is blazing a path toward the adoption of a VMT fee to pay for highway transportation.

IBTTA commends the members of the Financing Commission and the Bipartisan Policy Center for their wisdom in issuing this statement. We agree that we must move to a performance based surface transportation funding system that relies on direct user fees.

The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) is the worldwide association for the owners and operators of toll facilities and the businesses that support them. Founded in 1932, IBTTA’s mission is to advance toll financed transportation.