

THE TOLL ADVANTAGE

In 1991, as an element of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Congress recognized that states and local governments needed new tools to finance the development of new highway capacity, and to repair and reconstruct our nation=s aging transportation infrastructure. ISTEA granted the flexibility to blend federal funds and toll revenues to develop new highway capacity, and Congressional support for toll financing was reaffirmed in the 1995 National Highway System (NHS) approval which enhanced this flexibility.

Most recently, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) allows for the conversion of up to three existing interstate highways to tolled facilities, and up to 15 [value pricing](#) projects. As the federal transportation program grows increasingly decentralized, there is growing interest at the state and municipal levels to consider the merits of the purest form of user fee, tolling.

§ Toll financing is a powerful, successful tool with many advantages:

§ Toll financing is a successful, well-tested method to build and maintain vitally needed roads, bridges and tunnels.

§ Tolls are cost-effective and link user fees directly to specific projects.

§ Toll financing helps to preserve federal or state transportation funds for other priority projects, allowing roads which can support themselves, in whole or in part, to do so, and freeing resources to aid those that can=t support themselves.

§ Motorists give toll financing their overwhelming support.

§ Toll facilities are well-maintained. Motorists enjoy reduced vehicle operating costs when they use toll roads, bridges and tunnels.

§ Toll roads are well-patrolled and safe. Toll facilities are three times as safe as all U.S. roads.

§ Toll projects are completed very quickly. The result is lower overall construction costs and transportation capacity which is available to the driving public many years sooner than would otherwise be possible.

§ Toll projects face very strict market tests before they can move forward. This insures that only projects which are economically and financially sound, and which serve the needs of motorists, are built.

§ Toll roads are a bargain. Toll rates generally have not kept pace with inflation. Average toll rates in the United States are currently 4.4 cents per mile.

§ Toll facilities fill vital road needs, and connect major portions of our nation's transportation system.

- § Motorists generally have the choice of using a toll facility or an alternative tax-supported route. The result is less congestion for all drivers, improved air quality, and enhanced mobility and economic growth.
- § Toll agencies are on the forefront of technological innovation. Non-stop electronic collection of tolls is now possible, allowing greater toll plaza efficiency and the potential for lower toll collection costs.

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There are no free roads. ^(TM)