



STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE, TUNNEL AND TURNPIKE ASSOCIATION

REGARDING

**PRICING AND TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CONGESTION
ON AND FINANCING OF AMERICA'S ROADS**

BEFORE THE

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

ON

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INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE, TUNNEL AND TURNPIKE ASSOCIATION

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On behalf of the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA), we are pleased to submit this Statement for the Record to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Highways and Transit (Subcommittee).

IBTTA is the worldwide association for the owners and operators of toll facilities and the businesses that provide products and services to the industry. Our mission is to advance transportation solutions through tolling. Founded in 1932, IBTTA has more than 60 toll agency members in the United States and hundreds more in 20 countries on six continents.

We commend you, Chairman Norton, Ranking Member Davis, and the subcommittee for working to develop a thoughtful successor to the FAST Act that considers ways to manage congestion and generate additional revenues to maintain and improve the nation's surface transportation infrastructure.

While IBTTA supports increasing the fuel tax to pump additional revenue into the Highway Trust Fund, no level of increase will likely be enough to address the large and growing investment needs across transportation modes among all the states. Therefore, road operators should have access to as many funding tools as possible to manage their transportation assets. While tolling is not the solution to every transportation problem, it is a very powerful and effective tool now used to support more than 6,000 miles of the most heavily traveled highways in 34 states and Puerto Rico.

Congress has been instrumental in the exploration of congestion management through pricing with the establishment of the Congestion Pilot Pricing Program in 1991. The program was renamed the Value Pricing Pilot Program in 1998 and it has allowed many states and local governments to research, explore and implement different ways in which road pricing could be introduced to meet transportation demands.

Because the subject of this hearing is "Pricing and Technology Strategies to Address Congestion on and Financing of America's Roads," we would like to make the Subcommittee aware of the current use of tolling systems along with other innovative methods and technologies that are now being used to reduce congestion and improve vehicle throughput in congested urban areas. Toll agencies have been intimately involved in developing and implementing many of these systems and innovations.

Congestion Pricing

During the hearing, there were statements suggesting some confusion about the goals of congestion pricing and how it works. We will attempt to clear up some of the confusion.

Congestion pricing is different from traditional tolling. The toll on a typical toll road like the New Jersey Turnpike is a fixed price and is used to retire the debt on that road and pay for the ongoing maintenance (pavement repair) and operation (snow removal, etc.) of the toll road.

The I-66 Express Lane facility in Northern Virginia outside Washington, DC is one example of congestion pricing that was mentioned in the hearing. The I-66 Express Lanes are known as "priced managed lanes." They are not typical toll lanes. These priced managed lanes were

designed for the specific purpose of reducing congestion in the lanes to ensure that traffic flows smoothly at a minimum speed of 50 mph or higher. In this case, the toll increases as congestion increases and falls as congestion falls. Increasing the toll discourages some motorists from entering the lane so that those who remain are able to drive under “free flow” conditions. When congestion in the priced lane dissipates, the toll decreases. This is called dynamic pricing. The \$47 figure that is often cited is the peak charge that very few people pay. In fact, only .08 percent of express lane trips paid a toll higher than \$40.

Data from the Virginia Department of Transportation show that the average round-trip price on the I-66 Express Lanes for the month of January 2018 was \$12.37, \$8.07 eastbound and \$4.30 westbound. Out of 594,381 trips in January, only 461 trips were priced at \$40 or more, or 0.08 percent of all express lane trips.

An important distinction to keep in mind is that HOV and bus traffic remains free or discounted on the I-66 Express Lanes, preserving an incentive for drivers to consider changing their travel mode by adding passengers and thereby increasing corridor throughput. Express lanes are charging for available space in otherwise exclusive HOV lanes and tolled traffic could be entirely excluded if HOV demand ever becomes high enough to make full use of that space. Very high toll rates suggest that at certain times such space is, in fact, scarce which should be viewed positively as an indicator of high HOV use. When HOV traffic volume is low and dedicated space is otherwise unused, allowing single occupancy vehicles (SOV's) to make use of that space for a fee (regulated to ensure consistent rate of travel) is an efficient use of space that would otherwise be unused. When the Express Lanes are functioning at high capacity, this also benefits the non-toll payers by reducing some of the traffic load in the general purpose lanes.

The 91 Express Lane facility which opened in Orange County, California in December 1995 is another example of priced managed lanes. The Express Lane facility consists of two reversible lanes in the median of SR 91 which has two general purpose lanes in each direction, for a total of six lanes. The price to ride in the Express Lanes changes by time of day to ensure free-flow travel through the Express Lanes. The two Express Lanes represent 33% of the lane capacity in the corridor (2 lanes/6 lanes = 33%). However, because of the free-flow characteristics enabled by variable pricing, during the afternoon peak, the two Express Lanes handle more than 40% of throughput.

The 91 Express Lane facility was the first Priced Managed Lane facility in the U.S. Because of their success, many other states have followed suit. Today, there are 51 priced managed lane facilities in 11 states that operate 718 center line miles of roadway as noted in the following chart.

Chart 1. Express Lanes by US State as of August 15, 2019

<p><u>California</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91 Express Lanes - Orange County • 91 Express Lanes - Riverside County • I-10 Express Lanes • I-110 Express Lanes • I-15 Express Lanes • I-580 Express Lanes • I-680 Contra Costa Express Lanes • I-680 Sunol Express Lanes • Silicon Valley Express Lanes (I-880/237 Express Lanes) <p><u>Colorado</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-25 Express Lanes • I-70 Mountain Express Lanes • US 36 Express Lanes <p><u>Florida</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-595 Express • I-75/Palmetto Express Lanes • I-95 Express • Veterans Expressway (SR 589) Express Lanes • I-295 Express Lanes • Beachline Expressway (SR-528) Express Lanes <p><u>Georgia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-75 South Metro Express Lanes • I-85 Express Lanes • Northwest Corridor Express Lanes • I-85 Express Lanes Extension 	<p><u>North Carolina</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-77 Express <p><u>Maryland</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway - Express Toll Lanes (ETL) <p><u>Minnesota</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-35E Express Lanes • I-35W Express Lanes • I-394 Express Lanes <p><u>Texas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 635 East HOV/Express Lanes (TEXpress Lanes) • 71 Toll Lane • DFW Connector (SH-114) TEXpress Lanes • I-10 West (Katy Managed Lanes) HOV/HOT Lane • I-30 TEXpress Lanes • I-35E TEXpress Lanes • IH 45 North (Gulf Freeway) HOV/HOT Lane • IH 45 South (Gulf Freeway) HOV/HOT Lane • LBJ Express TEXpress Lanes • MoPac Express Lanes • North Tarrant Express (NTE) I-35W TEXpress Lanes 	<p><u>Texas (cont'd)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Tarrant Express (NTE) I-820/SH121/18 3 TEXpress Lanes • SH-114 TEXpress Lanes (Midtown Express) • US 290 (Northwest Freeway) HOV/HOT lane • US 59 (Eastex Freeway) HOV/HOT lane • US 59 (Southwest Freeway) HOV/HOT lane • SH 183 TEXpress Lanes (Midtown Express) • Loop 12 TEXpress Lanes (Midtown Express) <p><u>Utah</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-15 Express Lanes <p><u>Virginia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 495 Express Lanes • 64 Express Lanes • I-66 Express Lanes Inside the Beltway • I-95 Express Lanes <p><u>Washington</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-405 Express Toll Lanes • SR 167 - HOT Lanes <p style="text-align: right;">Source: IBTTA TollMiner <small>™</small></p>
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Express lanes offer numerous benefits including:

- **Trip Time Reliability:** The traffic metering function of variable pricing promotes predictable travel times.
- **Travel-Time Savings:** By managing traffic flow, express lanes allow higher speeds than congested general-purpose lanes.
- **Enhanced Corridor Mobility:** Improved trip-time reliability, higher speeds, travel-time savings, and possible transit improvements all lead to greater mobility at the corridor level.
- **Environmental Advantages:** Compared to general-purpose lanes, express lanes limit greenhouse gas emissions caused by stop-and-go traffic.
- **Travel Options:** Express lanes provide Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV) motorists with the option of paying for a congestion-free, dependable, and faster trip.
- **Efficient Use of Capacity:** Express lanes provide an opportunity to improve the efficiency of HOV lanes by filling “excess capacity” that would not otherwise be used.

There are many different tools that can be used to reduce congestion and improve mobility in congested urban areas. Priced Managed Lanes, which are enabled by electronic toll collection, are one of those tools.

Several of the witnesses made statements about congestion and pricing with which we agree, and we would like to highlight them here:

Given that traffic congestion is inherently a local phenomenon, the federal government has a limited set of tools to address it. Modernizing federal law to permit greater flexibility at the state and local level to price road use is the best way to address peak-hour traffic congestion that plagues many of America’s metropolitan areas. –
Competitive Enterprise Institute

AASHTO represents states with a range of viewpoints on tolling and pricing, and as a result, the association supports increased tolling flexibility to states to allow those states that so choose to maximize revenue-raising opportunities in light of federal funding challenges. Greater flexibility would allow states to work with their communities to use tolling to help improve their transportation systems. ODOT also supports this increased flexibility. –
Oregon DOT

Almost every solution strategy works somewhere in some situation. And almost every strategy is the wrong treatment in some places and times. Just like the specific set of strategies used to improve mobility is the result of a public engagement and technical design process, the level of congestion deemed unacceptable is a local decision. –
Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Innovations in the Tolling Industry

The core issue associated with urban traffic congestion is the difficulty of expanding facilities and capacity to accommodate current or future travel demand. Even with adequate funding the acquisition of additional right of way ranges from extremely difficult to impossible, forcing any road operator to consider ways to make the most efficient use of already existing access.

As already discussed, managed lanes are one response, including High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. Ramp metering using traffic lights to allow vehicles access at limited rates to preserve the rate of travel on a main roadway is another response. Coupling these methods with pricing has been successful in boosting the effectiveness of traffic management.

The tolling industry continues to lead the way in transportation innovations both in the implementation of transportation programs and in the use of technology. IBTTA members are involved in several programs that encourage greater transit use as well as higher density (and higher speed) commutes in congested areas.

Examples include:

The Reversible Express Lanes (REL), operated by the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority in Florida, was a first-of-its-kind facility combining the innovations of concrete segmental bridges, reversible express lanes, and all electronic tolling. As in many urban areas, purchasing the additional land needed in this corridor to accomplish a typical highway widening was neither physically nor financially feasible. To minimize the footprint of the expressway, most of the project was constructed as a concrete segmental bridge using only 6 feet of space within the existing median. The REL provides quality service with an aesthetically pleasing structure and reduced impacts to the community and the environment.

The REL provides a direct connection between Brandon and downtown Tampa, allowing for express travel of people in cars and buses. It is an innovative project that has won approximately two dozen awards by local, state, national and international organizations.

Coordination with transit services. In 2014, the state of Georgia embarked upon a strategic integration of two of its major transportation agencies – the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA). By integrating organizations responsible for financing road construction projects and operating toll facilities (SRTA) and administering a regional network of express commuter buses (GRTA), the state aimed to more efficiently address the state's transportation issues by identifying opportunities for shared infrastructure, operations and costs. Since this integration, the combined agencies have successfully applied innovative approaches to achieve their common goal of improving regional mobility in Metro Atlanta.

As a newly consolidated transportation agency, both entities benefited from efficiencies in shared operational and organizational resources. This included the formation of a single, unified customer service operation. Additionally, seeking to take advantage of the shared infrastructure, SRTA introduced the Commuter Credits Program to help commuters think about their transportation options in a more integrated way. The stated goals of the program were to:

1. Promote alternate transportation modes for Peach Pass users traveling Georgia's Express Lanes (Peach Pass is the electronic tolling program in Georgia);
2. Provide an incentive for Peach Pass users to change their driving behavior and shift some SOV usage away from peak periods;
3. Increase usage of express commuter transit service in the I-85 corridor;
4. Offer options that offset the costs of increasing tolls due to increasing demand; and
5. Reinforce the "4Ts Strategies" of congestion reduction:
 - Transit
 - Teleworking
 - Tolling
 - Technology

The Commuter Credits program focuses on providing alternatives to travelling solo during the peak periods on Atlanta's congested I-85 corridor. The program has three components;

- Shift Commute – The goal of this program was to reduce southbound congestion on I-85 during the morning peak period (7 am to 8 am). The program was by invitation only, to Peach Pass customers who commute four to five times per week during this period. These customers were offered \$3 per week if they reduced their peak period commutes to three times or less in the Express Lanes (for a total of up to \$50 over six months).
- Start a Carpool – The goal of this program was to attract carpools to the Express Lanes. The program was open to carpools with at least one Peach Pass customer and offered multiple incentives including \$3 per day toll credits (up to \$100) and monthly drawings for \$25 in toll credits.
- Ride Transit – The goal of this program was to shift auto trips during the peak periods to Xpress bus trips. The program awarded toll lane credits to people who used GRTA Xpress routes instead of utilizing their Peach Pass toll accounts during commute periods. Individuals who rode Xpress buses along the I-85 Express Lanes were eligible for a monthly toll credit of \$2 per trip for up to five trips per month equaling a total of up to \$60 over six months.

Conclusion

There are many other instances of toll agencies across the nation stepping up to address congestion and transportation investment needs. There is no single “answer” or “one size fits all” approach that works in all places across the country.

As we look to the future of a growing population, changing mobility patterns, and technological advances, it is important that states and local governments responsible for meeting transportation demands have maximum flexibility to address their challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record. Pricing and technology strategies to address congestion are complex topics that cannot be easily described or understood in a single public hearing. At IBTTA, we want to continue to be a resource to you and, therefore, look forward to working with members of the Subcommittee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as you continue to work on the reauthorization of the FAST Act.