

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**IBTTA Statement in Reaction to
Utility Companies' Meeting with President Obama**
Most Toll Agencies Already Waive Tolls in a Crisis

WASHINGTON D.C. – When meeting with President Barack Obama regarding emergency response, utility companies requested he waive highway tolls for crews during extreme-weather related emergencies. [Patrick Jones](#), Executive Director and CEO of the [International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association \(IBTTA\)](#), the worldwide association representing toll facility owners and operators and the businesses that serve them, responded that **“most toll agencies already waive tolls during times of crisis.”**

“We strongly believe it is essential for toll agencies, utility companies and emergency response personnel to work together to ensure the most expedited passage during times of crisis,” said Patrick Jones, Executive Director and CEO of IBTTA. **“The fact is that most toll agencies already waive tolls for some period of time leading up to and during an emergency. This helps speed the evacuation of the affected area and prevents harm to people who may feel trapped because they can’t afford to pay a toll. At the same time, toll facilities have operating expenses as well as financial obligations to their lenders that require them to collect tolls from all users. In the aftermath, it is not logical to grant free passage to utility companies that are being paid for their services and are capable of paying the toll.”**

During its Winter Board of Directors Meeting in Miami, FL, IBTTA held a forum on Super Storm Sandy. The forum took place just months after Sandy devastated a swath of the northeastern United States from New Jersey to Connecticut, and its purpose was simple: to capture front-line success stories and lessons learned from affected tolling authorities, and from agencies in Florida with a history of coping with severe storms. As a result, IBTTA produced a report on the forum – [Super Storm Sandy: Adaptation and Resilience](#).

Once the emergency is over and people begin to return to the area, utility and other crews that are being compensated for their efforts should be expected to pay tolls to ride on the toll roads that they use to do their work. If the issue is about “stopping to pay tolls” because of lost time and the possible inconvenience of finding cash to pay the toll *in the moment*, most toll agencies would be willing to offer expedited passage to utility crews by opening toll lanes for swift passage without having to stop to hand over cash *at that moment*. However, the utilities that are involved in the repair work should be required to pay the tolls in some “true up” method on behalf of their crews that respond to the emergency.

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About IBTTA

[The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association \(IBTTA\)](#) is the worldwide association for the owners and operators of toll facilities and the businesses that serve tolling. Founded in 1932, IBTTA has members in more than 20 countries and on six continents. Through advocacy, thought leadership and education, members are implementing state-of-the-art, innovative user-based transportation financing solutions to address the critical infrastructure challenges of the 21st century. For more information, visit www.ibtta.org or join us on Twitter [@IBTTA](#) or [#TollRoads](#).