

CONNECTICUT

Transportation Funding Initiative

Legislative Session: Bill was introduced on January 25, 2013.

Title of Legislation: “An Act Decreasing the Gasoline Tax and Establishing Electronic Tolls on Connecticut’s Highways Using a Congestion Pricing System” (Senate Bill 699)

Sponsors of Legislation

- Senator Gary D. LeBeau (D-3rd District)
- Co-Sponsor: Representative Patricia A. Dillon (D-92nd District)

Summary of Legislation

“To allow Connecticut to become more competitive concerning gasoline taxes, to establish electronic tolls using a congestion pricing system to ensure that vehicle operators pay their fair user fees and to ensure the solvency of the Special Transportation Fund.”¹

Status of Legislation: Failed – Died

On January 25, 2013, SB 699 was introduced and sent to the Joint Committee on Transportation. There was a public hearing scheduled for February 25, 2013, but by March 27, 2013, SB 699 failed the “Joint Favorable Deadline” that had been established.

Proponents of Legislation

- **The Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby²**

Jill Kelly & Carol Leighton, Co-Chairs of the Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby

- **Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers³**

Roy Merrit, Jr., Chairman’s testimony in support of tolls.

Opposition to Legislation

- **American Motorcyclist Association**
- **Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC)⁴**

¹ State of Connecticut General Assembly

² <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TRAdat/Tmy/2013SB-00699-R000225-Jill%20Kelly%20&%20Carol%20Leighton,%20Co-Chairs,%20The%20Connecticut%20Citizens%20Transportation%20Lobby-TMY.PDF>

³ <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TRAdat/Tmy/2013SB-00699-R000225-Roy%20Merrit,%20Jr.,%20Chairman,%20Legislative%20Affairs%20Committee,%20Connecticut%20Society%20of%20Civil%20Engineers%20Section%20of%20the%20American%20Society%20of%20Civil%20Engineers-TMY.PDF>

Testimony from Michael Riley, who is the President of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut

- **Al Phillips, a resident who would prefer paying more in taxes than for higher tolls.** ⁵
- **Cindy Penkoff, a life-long resident who opposed this legislation.** ⁶
- **Frank DeFelice, the Planning and Zoning Commissioner & Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commissioner in the town of Durham, Connecticut.** ⁷

Why This Bill Failed & Lessons Learned

Minimal Public Support for Tolls.

At the general public hearings that were held for this legislation, both citizens and businesses spoke out against this legislation. The main outcome of the testimony at the public hearing was a shared anti-toll sentiment. Polling data somewhat reflected the strong public opposition displayed at the general public hearing for SB 699. For example, according to the March 2013 poll conducted by Quinnipiac University, 58% of registered voters who were interviewed opposed creating tolls on highways in Connecticut. However, perhaps most importantly, 54% of voters interviewed for the poll said that they would support tolls if the funds were used to decrease Connecticut's gas tax; this is exactly what SB 699 proposed.

Lack of Media Attention.

Lack of Citizen Mobilization & Support from External Organizations.

Polling Data

#1: Quinnipiac University Poll (March 12, 2013)

Quinnipiac University conducted this poll from March 7, 2013 through March 10, 2013 and 1,144 registered voters were polled in this survey. Respondents were contacted and interviewed by landline phones and cell phones.

Poll Results:

- 58% of Connecticut voters polled in this survey opposed to creating tolls on highways in Connecticut, while 39% supported this proposal.
- 57% of voters supported tolls in Connecticut if the toll revenue was dedicated to fixing Connecticut's roads and bridges. 40% of respondents did not support this proposal.
- 54% of voters in this poll would support tolls if the funds were used to decrease Connecticut's gas tax, and 44% of respondents did not support this policy proposal.

⁴ <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TRAdat/Tmy/2013SB-00699-R000225-Michael%20Riley,%20President,%20Motor%20Transport%20Association%20of%20Connecticut%20-TMY.PDF>

⁵ <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TRAdat/Tmy/2013SB-00699-R000225-Al%20Phillips-TMY.PDF>

⁶ <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TRAdat/Tmy/2013SB-00699-R000225-Cindy%20Penkoff-TMY.PDF>

⁷ <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TRAdat/Tmy/2013SB-00699-R000225-Frank%20DeFelice-TMY.PDF>

32. Do you support or oppose putting tolls on state highways in Connecticut?

| | Tot | Rep | Dem | Ind | Men | Wom |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Support | 39% | 30% | 39% | 44% | 39% | 40% |
| Oppose | 58 | 68 | 58 | 55 | 59 | 57 |
| DK/NA | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

TREND: Do you support or oppose putting tolls on state highways in Connecticut?

| | Mar 12 2013 | Mar 18 2010 | Mar 10 2009 |
|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Support | 39 | 40 | 35 |
| Oppose | 58 | 56 | 61 |
| DK/NA | 3 | 3 | 3 |

33. Would you support or oppose putting tolls on state highways in Connecticut if the money were used for repairs to the state's roads and bridges?

| | Tot | Rep | Dem | Ind | Men | Wom |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Support | 57% | 51% | 60% | 59% | 55% | 59% |
| Oppose | 40 | 49 | 39 | 38 | 43 | 38 |
| DK/NA | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |

34. Would you support or oppose putting tolls on state highways in Connecticut if the money were used to reduce the state's gas tax?

| | Tot | Rep | Dem | Ind | Men | Wom |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Support | 53% | 51% | 51% | 55% | 51% | 54% |
| Oppose | 44 | 47 | 45 | 43 | 47 | 42 |
| DK/NA | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 |

#2: Public Acceptance Data (2009)⁸

In 2009, Cambridge Systematics, Inc. submitted a formal report for the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, and the final publication was called the "Connecticut Electronic Tolls and Congestion Pricing Study." The report discusses the issue of public acceptance of tolls and cites the "NCHRP Synthesis 377: Compilation of Public Opinion Data on Tolls and Road Pricing" for public opinion data. According to the public opinion data on tolling, these are the central themes:

1. The public wants to see the value;
2. The public wants to react to tangible and specific examples;
3. The public cares about the use of revenues;
4. The public learns from experience;

⁸ http://www.ibtta.org/files/PDFs/final_report_-_statewide_tolling_study.pdf

5. The public uses knowledge and available information;
6. The public believes in equity but wants fairness;
7. The public wants simplicity; and
8. The public favors tolls over taxes.

Text of Legislation

Full Bill Text: <ftp://ftp.cga.ct.gov/2013/tob/s/2013SB-00699-R00-SB.htm>

References

http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/CGAbillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=SB699

<http://openstates.org/ct/bills/2013/SB699/>

Quinnipiac University Poll. March 12, 2013 <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/institutes-and-centers/polling-institute/connecticut/release-detail?ReleaseID=1864>

American Motorcyclist Association. <http://capwiz.com/amacycle/issues/bills/?type=ST>

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