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Joe Courtney  
Congress of the United States  
2nd District, Connecticut

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August 22, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

It has come to my attention that the State of Rhode Island has submitted an Expression of Interest outlining its desire to toll Interstate 95. I write today to express my serious concern and strong opposition to the proposal as submitted to the Federal Highway Administration.

The June 29, 2011 proposal by the State of Rhode Island outlined a plan to use toll revenue to finance a number of improvements in the state, including replacing the Providence Viaduct, reconstructing the I-95/Route 4 interchange, and bringing the 43.4 miles of I-95 and 23.6 miles of I-295 within the state borders to a state of good repair. It is my understanding that this submission is just the first step in a multi-step process in which the FHWA's Tolling and Pricing Team will review the proposal and inform the state on how to submit a formal application for tolling authority, followed by formal submission of a tolling application for evaluation.

As a strong supporter of transportation infrastructure investment, I understand the challenge faced by states – particularly those in New England – in addressing the age and condition of our roads, highways, and bridges. However, while there are many more steps in evaluating Rhode Island's proposal, I am deeply concerned about one aspect of the plan as outlined in the submission to FHWA – namely the apparent plan to impose a toll only on one end of the state's segment of I-95, near the border with Connecticut. No such toll is proposed for the Massachusetts-Rhode Island border in the plan as submitted.

As your department and the FHWA evaluate the tolling proposal submitted by the State of Rhode Island, I ask that you consider the potential impact of imposing tolling at only one side of the proposed toll facility. This kind of approach would disproportionately impact travelers in my state, particularly in the southeastern Connecticut region. In addition, I question the fairness of paying for the upkeep of nearly 70 miles of two separate interstate highways as a single toll facility.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the concerns and the views of my constituents as this process moves forward. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress