

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2008

Mr. John F. Barna, Jr.
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street
Room 2233 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Barna:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the implementation of congestion pricing along the I-10, I-110 and I-210 corridors as outlined in a April 24, 2008 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and the Federal Department of Transportation (DoT). While we share concerns about regional congestion and future growth, we do not believe such an expansive project throughout the region is a responsible solution and urge you to consider our concerns when developing a formal position for transmittal to the California State Legislature.

First, the MOU signed by Metro would charge many of the drivers currently meeting requirements to drive on the HOV lanes. This includes two passenger vehicles that are currently eligible under regulations governing HOV-2 lanes within the congestion pricing region. Other possible persons affected include drivers of hybrid vehicles who are also currently eligible to drive on the HOV lanes. Unfortunately, other details regarding pricing plans and access to the HOT lanes are not yet available and will not be until well past the California Transportation Commission's (CTC) scheduled hearings on this proposal. If performance of the HOV lanes on these corridors is an issue of concern, it would be more appropriate to hold a separate policy discussion, rather than address the issue in the context of a congestion pricing plan.

Transit and transportation policy provides significant opportunity to grow the economy and provide for greater equity between persons of varying income levels. For example, households that use public transit save an average of \$6,251 every year and for every \$1 spent on transportation infrastructure results in a gain of \$6 in jobs and economic development. Benefits of this type are particularly important for the communities in the affected corridor, where more than 11 percent of families live below the federal poverty line, the median per capita income is over \$7,000 below the national average, and more than 87 percent of workers drive a car, truck or van to get to work each day. Unfortunately, the plan outlined in the MOU fails to include an assessment of the impact congestion pricing on the economies of these affected communities.

We are also concerned about the impact of the transfer of congestion onto our local roads. The transportation department has acknowledged that when toll rates are applied, some drivers divert to "free alternatives." Increasing traffic on our neighborhood streets may not only increase local congestion, but may also pose serious safety concerns. Unfortunately, the proposal lacks initiatives to sufficiently address the safety concerns associated with the transfer of congestion

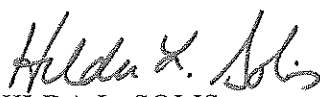
onto local roads. In addition, implementation of congestion tolls can significantly impact the freight movement by increasing shipping costs, diverting traffic onto alternate roadways or requiring shippers and customers to alter their schedules to avoid the tolls.


Furthermore, this project is estimated to cost approximately \$110.3 million for the first 52 miles along the I-210 and the I-10 and an additional \$71 million for portions along the I-110. According to the MOU, none of the \$213.6 million in federal funds can be used to certify availability of funds for implementation under the September 30, 2008 deadline. It is our understanding the funds will come from Propositions A and C, sales taxes which were approved for bus services and the construction and operation of bus transit and rail systems. We question the diversion of these funds for any period of time from their intended purpose, particularly a purpose with such consequences for the taxpayer.


Our concerns about congestion pricing projects are shared by the primary transportation authorizers in Congress. In November, 2007 House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairmen Oberstar and DeFazio and Ranking Members Mica and Duncan wrote to Secretary Peters stating that the requirement to congestion price in order to receive federal funds to reduce congestion is not supported either in appropriations legislation or in public law. It is their belief that DoT's action undermines the intent of federal transportation laws as enacted by Congress. As a result, they are engaged in ongoing efforts to address this issue.

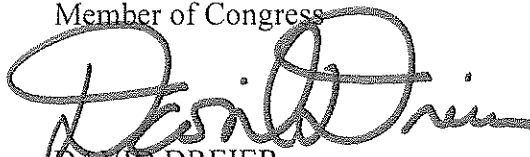
While we look forward to continuing to work with our transportation authorities and community leaders to reduce congestion, we cannot responsibly support implementation of a project which could have clear and serious ramifications on the communities in East Los Angeles, the San Gabriel Valley, the Inland Empire and other southern California commuters. We urge you to consider the full implications of this proposal when developing a formal CTC position for transmittal to the State Legislature.

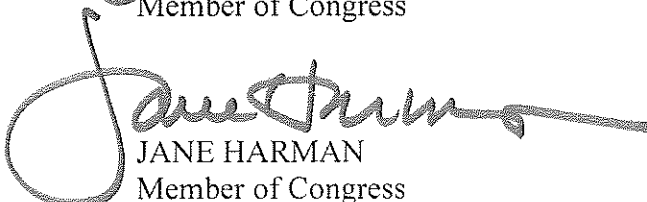
Sincerely,


HILDA L. SOLIS
Member of Congress


GARY G. MILLER
Member of Congress


GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress


DAVID DREIER
Member of Congress


JANE HARMAN
Member of Congress


DANA ROHABACHER
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JOE BACA
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LAURA RICHARDSON
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MAXINE WATERS
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