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## Canadian Study shows Pros and Cons of Speed Limiters

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*Land Line Magazine – July 10, 2008*

Canada's federal transportation ministry recently released a highly anticipated study on the pros and cons of speed limiters. The study, commissioned by a steering committee of provincial transportation officials, published its findings less than three weeks after the Ontario Legislature approved legislation that will require electronic speed limiters on all heavy trucks doing business in the province.

The study acknowledges many of the problems brought up by smaller owner-operator groups during the debate, but it also recognizes some of the environmental and safety benefits endorsed by large motor carrier associations. Both sides of the debate will likely use the study to promote their respective cases.

Canada's study reports that speed limiters would make highways safer, although much more so when roads are not congested. When road volumes near capacity (2000 vehicles per hour per lane) however, speed limiters can actually reduce safety levels when compared to trucks without them.

The study found that speed limiters would positively affect the environment through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fuel consumption on those particular trucks. However, 80 percent of owner operators interviewed in the study said they would no longer haul into Quebec or

Ontario to avoid being speed limited, which would limit competition because those operators would avoid those jurisdictions. The government-mandated limiters could also keep American owner-operators away and hinder Canadian truckers from doing business in and out of the province.

Ontario officials are hoping to implement the speed limiter legislation this fall, beginning with a six to 12 month education period and full enforcement starting in 2009.

## **New Louisiana Law Reins in Bridge Deals**

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*Land Line Magazine - July 15, 2008*

The governor of Louisiana has signed a new law addressing concerns about the potential sale or lease of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway. The law signed by Gov. Bobby Jindal requires any deals to sell or lease bridges more than five miles long to have legislative approval. It also requires lawmakers to give prior approval for deals transferring control, management or operation of bridges to private or public organizations.

Supporters said the legislation was needed because of public concern over confidential talks between Causeway officials and a Baton Rouge, Louisiana company about purchasing or operating the 24-mile long bridge between Jefferson and St. Tammany parishes.

Some say there is still concern that such a deal could result in higher tolls. The new law does not prohibit contracts for maintenance, bridge repairs, cleaning or other work, and tolls could still be collected.

## **S.F. uses Wireless Sensors to Manage Congestion**

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*New York Times - July 14, 2008*

*California* - The search for a parking spot in crowded San Francisco will soon get a little easier with new wireless sensors that will be glued to streets. This fall, the city will begin the country's most ambitious test of a wireless sensor network on 6,000 of its 24,000 metered parking spaces that will tell which of the spaces are free at any time.

Drivers can see where empty parking spots are located either by street sign displays or by viewing maps on their smart phones. It may even be possible to pay for parking by cell phone and add to the meter from their phone without returning to their vehicle.

Finding a solution to the parking problems has gained special significance in San Francisco after a 19-year-old was stabbed to death two years ago in a fight over a parking space.

Nearly a dozen major cities are working with technology companies to deploy so-called smart parking systems, though San Francisco is leading the pack. SFpark, a two-year \$95.5 million program is aimed at clearing the city's arteries and allow the city to adjust parking times and prices. For instance, evening parking times could be extended to allow longer stays in

restaurants.



*This sort of initiative is great but only a precursor of the real power of using technology to enhance transportation systems. The real potential has yet to be achieved. I have often likened our vision of the benefits of technology to our inability to see past the horizon because of the earth's curvature.*

*California is another state that has recently gone "hands free" for cell phone usage while driving. They will have to reconcile that effort with drivers in San Francisco looking at their smart phones to figure out where to park. Both are worthwhile—they just need to figure out how to make it all work for both safety and efficiency. TW*

## **NTTA Shows Off Open Tolling on Hwy. 121**

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*The Dallas Morning News – July 14, 2008*

**PLANO** – Visitors from 20 countries came to Texas this week to look at the future of toll road fee collection on an unopened section of State Highway 121. A three-day summit hosted by the North Texas Tollway Authority brought 400 delegates from South Africa, Brazil, Australia and Greece, among others, to discuss the evolution of toll collection, from tollbooths to open road tolling.

The movement to essentially eliminate change and move to open tolling is a hot topic internationally, according to Patrick D. Jones, executive director and chief executive officer of the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association. "The movement to open-road tolling is one of the holy grails of the toll industry; to find a way to allow customers to pay without having to stop and wait," Jones said.

The NTTA has accelerated the process of its current toll network to an electronic-only collection system like the open-road tolling of Highway 121. It plans to have the conversion complete by 2010. NTTA deputy executive director Rick Herrington said the authority wants motorists to have a seamless experience when using the network.

The electronic system will make toll revenue available for use in road construction, according to Herrington. Half of the NTTA's budget has been going to manual toll collection. The agency is helping tollbooth workers in the transition, retraining employees for jobs such as roadway supervisor.



*The technology for open road tolling is applied on such corridors as SR 91 in Orange County in a congestion-pricing model. The issues are largely sociological and political rather than technological. TW*

## **Columbia River Crossing Receives Conditional Approval**

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*The Columbian – July 10, 2008*

**PORTLAND** – A new Interstate 5 bridge in Portland has received conditional approval for imposing

tolls to discourage rush hour commuting across the bridge. The city's mayor-elect says this move will help citizens who do not like the land-use rules allowing sprawl in southwest Washington. The Portland City Council announced a conditional endorsement for the Columbia River Crossing Project, a \$4.2 billion plan to replace the six-lane I-5 bridge between Portland and Vancouver, Washington with a new toll bridge, light rail extension and six interchange rebuilds.

The city is among eight sponsors for the crossing, which supporters say will ease congestion between the two states. All eight must support a replacement bridge with rail for the project to have a chance to secure more than \$1 billion in federal highway and transit dollars.

Portland Mayor-elect Sam Adams said the bridge must meet his city's goals, including reducing traffic and a light rail extension, or it would not be built.

The Oregon and Washington transportation departments are leading the crossing study. Four agencies have endorsed the project so far: the cities of Vancouver and Portland, C-Tran and Trivet. The final two agencies – the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council and Metro – expect to make a decision in the next two weeks.

## **Bush Nominates Spectra President to Lead Highway Administration**

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*The Business Review – July 16, 2008*

*WASHINGTON, D.C.* - President George W. Bush has nominated former state Department of Transportation Commissioner Thomas J. Madison Jr. as the head of the Federal Highway Administration at the Department of Transportation. Madison is currently the president of Latham-based Spectra Subsurface Imaging Group, and was among 12 individuals nominated or named to positions under the current administration.

Madison was recognized for successfully advocating for the \$2.9 billion Transportation Bond Act of 2005 and helping to create public-private partnerships for the state's infrastructure projects. He served as New York's DOT commissioner from June 2005 to February 2007 under Gov. George Pataki.

He also worked between 1990 and 1999 as Deputy Broome County Executive and chief of staff, and executive assistant to Sen. Thomas Libous (R-Binghamton).

Madison said he was honored by the Bush's appointment. "If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to faithfully execute the duties of this important position," he said.

## **Part of Pa. Plan for I-80 Tolls Revealed**

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*Pocono Record – July 15, 2008*

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission unveiled plans to spend about \$250 million a year on road improvements using revenue from toll collections on I-80. The controversial proposal is part

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of a revised application to toll the interstate that is expected to be submitted for federal approval next month.

The Turnpike Commission said once the plan is approved, the commission could sell bonds to accelerate funding and begin work before tolling even begins. \$250 million is nearly four times what the state department of transportation currently spends on improvements to the 311-mile highway that stretches across Pennsylvania between Ohio and New Jersey.

Over the first ten years of its plan, the commission plans to rebuild or revamp 105 miles of the 40-year-old interstate, including replacing all 62 bridges and build a \$179 million connection to Interstate 99 near State College.

Under a state law passed a year ago, the turnpike would lease I-80 from PennDOT for 50 years, bringing a projected \$1 billion annually in toll revenues for the first decade. That number would increase to \$2.6 billion a year in the final years of the deal, which would be spent on transportation needs across the state.

A rival proposal to lease the interstate to a private consortium received a high bid of \$12.8 billion in upfront cash, but so far, the plan has received a cool reception from the legislature. If the lease option gains approval from the General Assembly, the tolling plan would be abandoned.

## Gasoline Prices Cutting into State Tax Revenue

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*The Olympian* – July 15, 2008

*Washington* - Sky-high gas prices are forcing people to drive less, which are causing tax collections that pay for road construction to decline. The cycle has prompted Washington state officials to start looking at raising money in other ways, including tolls, shifting money from health or environmental projects or a revised version of the tax on car values, which was rejected by voters several years ago.

"There are a lot of things going on in the world that affect our ability to put those projects out there. When we're getting a reduction in consumption, and this increase in prices, it's going to be a tough one for us," state budget director Victor Moore advised state Department of Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond recently.

The state DOT reported traffic decreased 2 percent in March and 1.4 percent in May compared with 2007. The state's 37.5-cent-per-gallon gas tax is the biggest source of funding for road improvements, and revenue estimates have been cut by \$95 million through next June.

Some lawmakers support returning to the car value tax, while others say money should be taken from the state's sales tax to pay for road projects. However, the state is expected to have a budget shortfall next year, and with major disagreement among lawmakers, the only option left may be to add no new projects next year, according to House Transportation Committee chairwoman Rep. Judy Clibborn, D-Mercer Island. "I just don't think that politically, people are willing to support new revenue sources for old projects," she said.

# Rhode Island Considers Tolls to Solve \$300M Problem

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*Providence Journal* – July 14, 2008

*PROVIDENCE* – Officials in Rhode Island are becoming desperate for a means to pay for the expensive work needed for the state's highways and bridges. As revenue sources decline, they are beginning to discuss drastic measures to increase funding; for example, imposing tolls on major highways like Route 95. The state projects up to \$300 million in shortfalls depending on the support provided by the federal government next year.

Governor Donald Carcieri's Blue Ribbon Panel for Transportation Funding is considering leasing state highways or bridges to private companies as well as possibly imposing tolls on existing highways. The governor appointed the 12-member panel, comprised of representatives from businesses, the FHWA and AAA, in March.

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