



***Toll Should Go To The Road***  
***An Opinion-Editorial Respectfully Submitted by Senator Florence Shapiro  
and Senator Chris Harris***

Building roads is one of the most important, but also one of the costliest roles the state has. The Texas transportation system has helped make the state the 10th largest economy in the world, and Texas leads the nation in total road and street mileage with 300,000 total miles.

Currently, under the State Constitution, only taxes on motor fuels and lubricants, vehicle registrations and federal reimbursements are specifically dedicated to fund acquiring rights-of-way, constructing, maintaining, and policing public roadways. But like these taxes, paid by the citizens of Texas, tolls come out of the people's pocketbooks. That is why we have authored Senate Joint Resolution 25, to constitutionally protect toll revenue for transportation projects in the state of Texas, and we are happy to report it has passed the full Senate and now heads to our colleagues in the House. If passed there, it will appear as a constitutional amendment on the November ballot.

Through the years, the legislature has put many tools in the transportation toolbox to finance strong transportation infrastructure throughout our state, one of which has been toll roads. And whether or not you are a proponent of tolling, we believe most can agree that the money raised through tolls should be put back into our state's transportation infrastructure.

Toll projects have the ability to produce large amounts of revenue both up front and over time, as was demonstrated by both the State Highway 121 project in Dallas, Denton & Collin Counties, as well as the State Highway 161 project in Dallas County.

The legislature currently operates under a policy that the funds from toll projects be used to build other transportation projects. This constitutional amendment goes further to ensure this practice is upheld in the future by constitutionally protecting these funds and marking them specifically for transportation needs.

From the first cattle trails to modern interstates, our Texas transportation system has been a leader on the state's road to prosperity. Now should be no different. If we have toll roads that are going to produce revenue, we want to make sure that toll revenue will only be used for

transportation projects, not for other purposes. By doing this, we can help build the extra mile for Texas transportation.

*Word Count: 372*

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