

**Leon Valley Toll Road Debate
SA Toll Party - Closing Statement
May 17, 2006**

The bottom line: the push for tolls is about a whole new tax on driving; it's runaway taxation actually making our roadways less safe and more expensive. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison introduced this into the congressional record: Accidents on surface streets increased 17 times when they put tolls on a nearby highway in Ohio and congestion on neighborhood streets TRIPLED!

Toll roads don't solve congestion; they manipulate it for profit. These toll roads are a recipe for economic disaster. It's not a lack of money, but lack of leadership, poor planning, and misplaced priorities that have created this mess.

TxDOT is big business. It takes in more money than Southwest Airlines and Starbucks! If Southwest Airlines can keep people moving and stay in the black year after year TxDOT can, too. The trouble is TxDOT is a government monopoly with NO competition! It's a bloated bureaucracy that needs to be reined in.

It's time TxDOT gets put on a diet and learns to manage its funds in a more fiscally responsible way that the public can trust. We're all tightening our belts and driving less due to high gas prices, TxDOT needs to tighten their belt, too.

Our politicians are gambling with these plans and they haven't properly studied them by any relevant standards. There's been no economic impact study, no study of the affect of high gas prices on toll feasibility, no study of more affordable, less invasive options like improving signal timing and intersections to maximize traffic flow, no coordination of new development to limit growth in already congested areas, and no consideration of having developers pay for the impact of their projects on infrastructure.

Politicians are making risky assumptions and risky decisions with YOUR tax money like 50 year toll agreements with foreign companies **that aren't even viable** when gas hits \$3 a gallon!

Here's what an Orange County resident had to say about (SR-91) this toll road in CA:

"The Non-Compete Agreements have effectively let the Transportation Authority hi-jack ALL transportation planning in the county. The majority of drivers can't justify paying the high tolls (which are \$ 8.50 ONE WAY for 10 miles).

Whose idea was it to abandon the concept of public highways?"

Then, businesses are concerned about how tolls will affect their employees' ability to get to work on time since they likely cannot afford to pay a toll. Tolls will affect a business' ability to retain good employees in addition to the increased cost of doing business.

The taxpayers will not stand idly by and allow our government and private special interests to hold Texas families' hostage to pay a toll just to drive to work, school, or shop without our consent! Our government has lost touch with those whom it is paid to serve.

Every alternative to tolls, whether a 10 cent or even 25 per gallon gas tax increase, are less money than tolls.

They're charging us nearly double the money to build tolls roads versus free roads. **So the simple solution sure seems to be to CAN the tolls.** They're saying we need **THREE times the money we currently get.** We've already built the entire federal interstate highway system and the entire state highway system, what do we need three times the money for? We built more roads between 1990 and 2000, but commute times only went up.

Gas tax equals pennies a day; tolls equal dollars day. Pro-tollers are putting lipstick on a pig...but it's still a pig and taxpayers and businesses alike know a **lousy deal** when they see one.

Pro-toll Peter Samuel, the father of toll roads, had this to say about TxDOT's approach to tolls: "In Texas the tollers are behaving arrogantly and with extraordinary political ineptitude.

Political support in TX has also been sapped by a bewilderingly unprincipled and unexplained intermixing of funding of projects by TxDOT. So far it is all politics as usual.

TxDOT's promiscuous approach to raising funds and their promotion of projects without even a semblance of study has been the anti-toll groups' major recruiter. "

In Texas Monthly's "Top 10 ways to Fix Texas" put "Stop the toll road menace" in #2. It states, "Turning planned freeways-that's freeways-into toll roads in urban areas and holding commuters hostage is downright un-American and un-Texan." TxDOT's own survey shows over 70% of Texans oppose tolling existing freeways, yet on they march without accountability. This is taxation without representation that calls for a taxpayer revolt the size of Texas.

Please go to SA Toll Party.com to see for yourself. Say NO to this statewide shift to privatizing and tolling our publicly funded FREEways at the ballot box in November.

We also encourage you to sign our online [petition](#) and to join our [Business Coalition](#). We'd also like to thank Rep. Castro, Councilwoman Guajardo, and the City of Leon Valley for hosting this forum tonight.